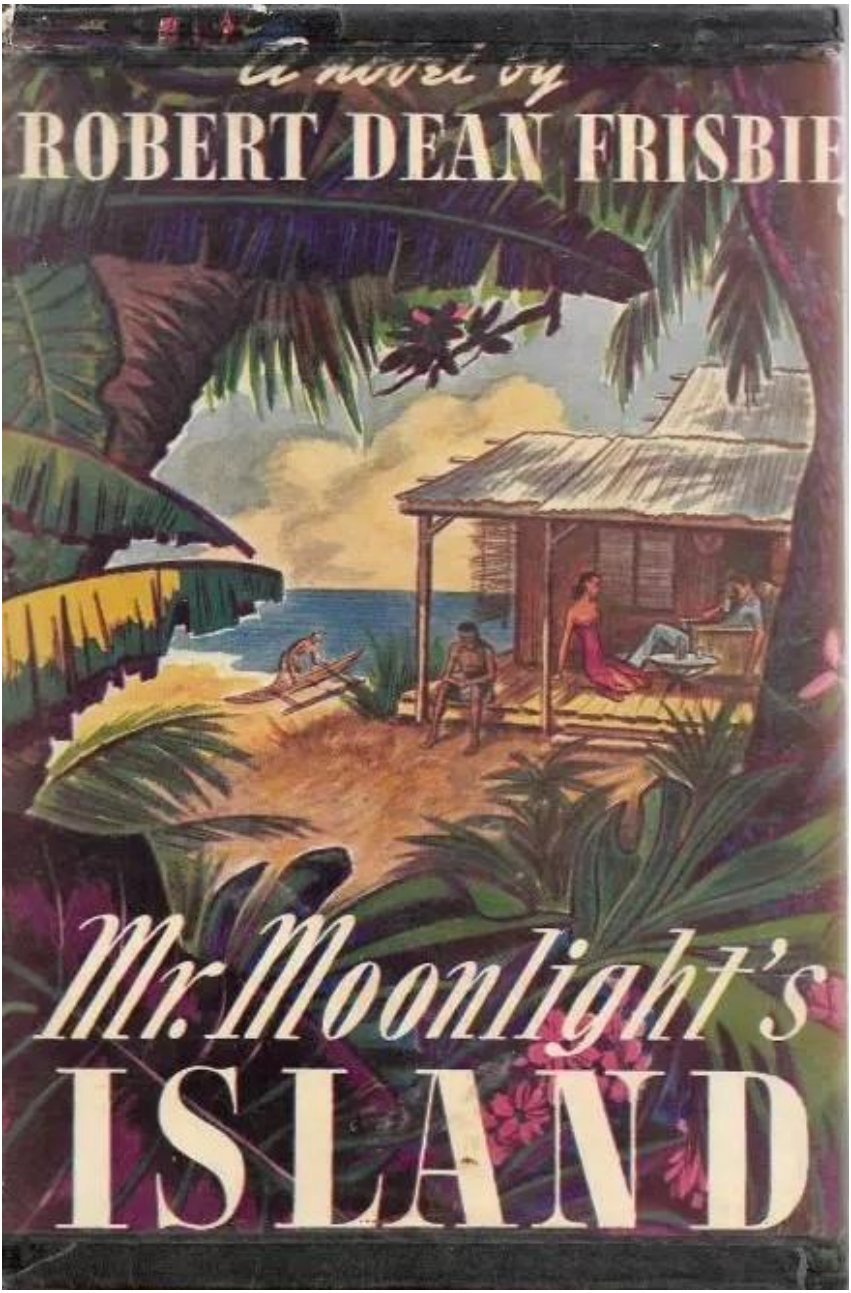
a novel by
ROBERT DEAN FRISBIE
Mr. Moonlight's
ISLAND

MR. MOONLIGHT'S ISLAND

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BY

ROBERT DEAN FRISBIE

Line-drawings by the author

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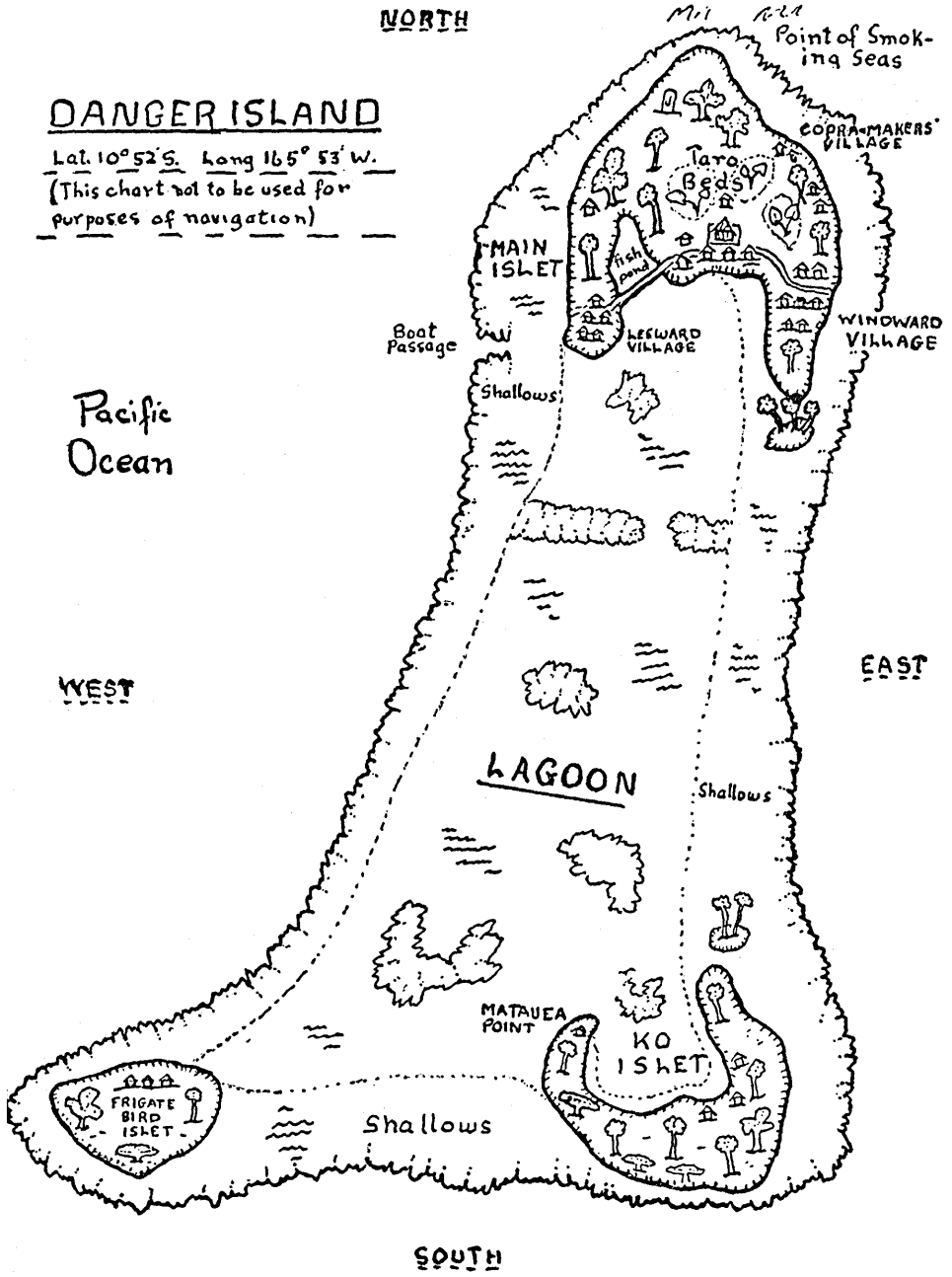
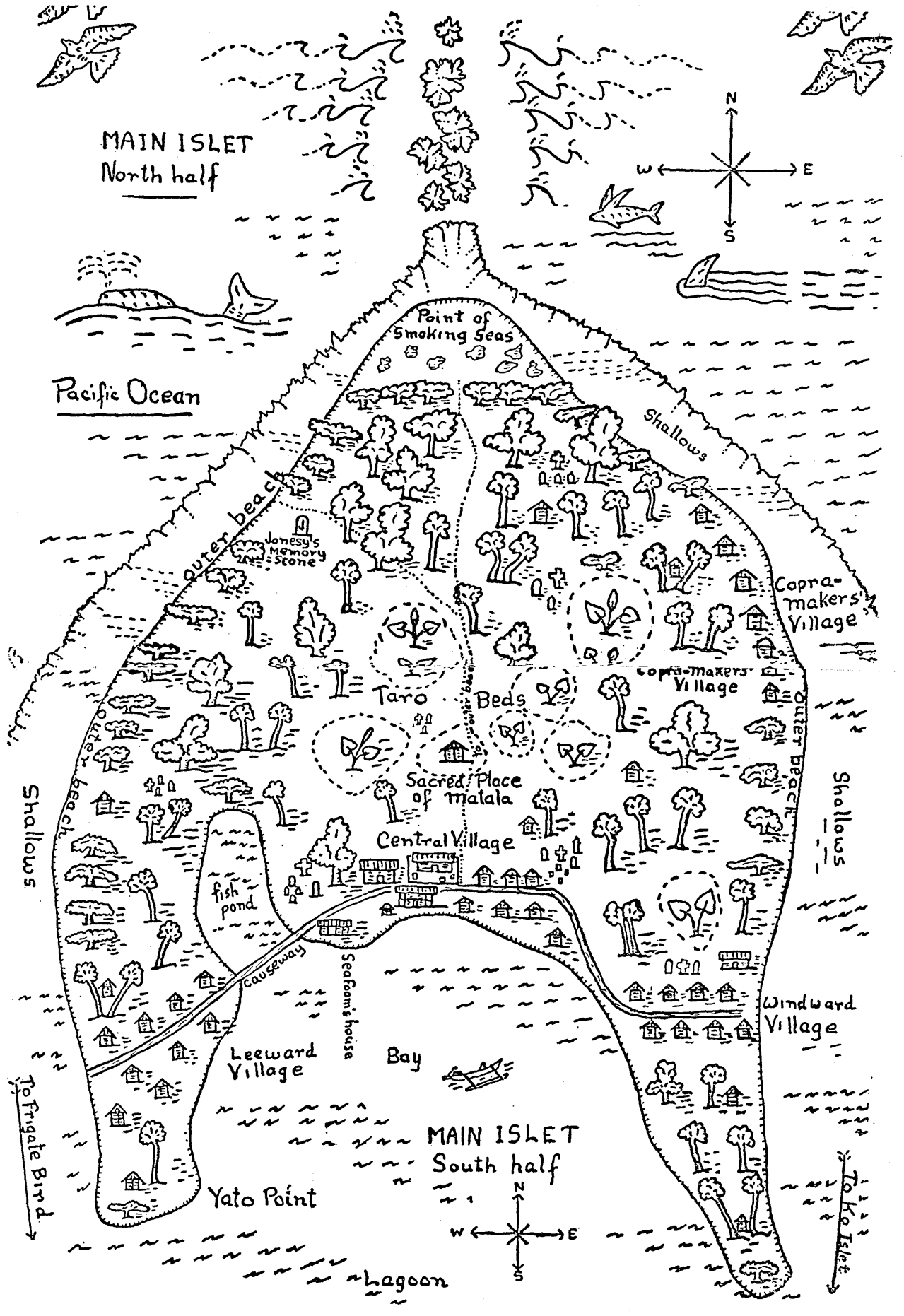
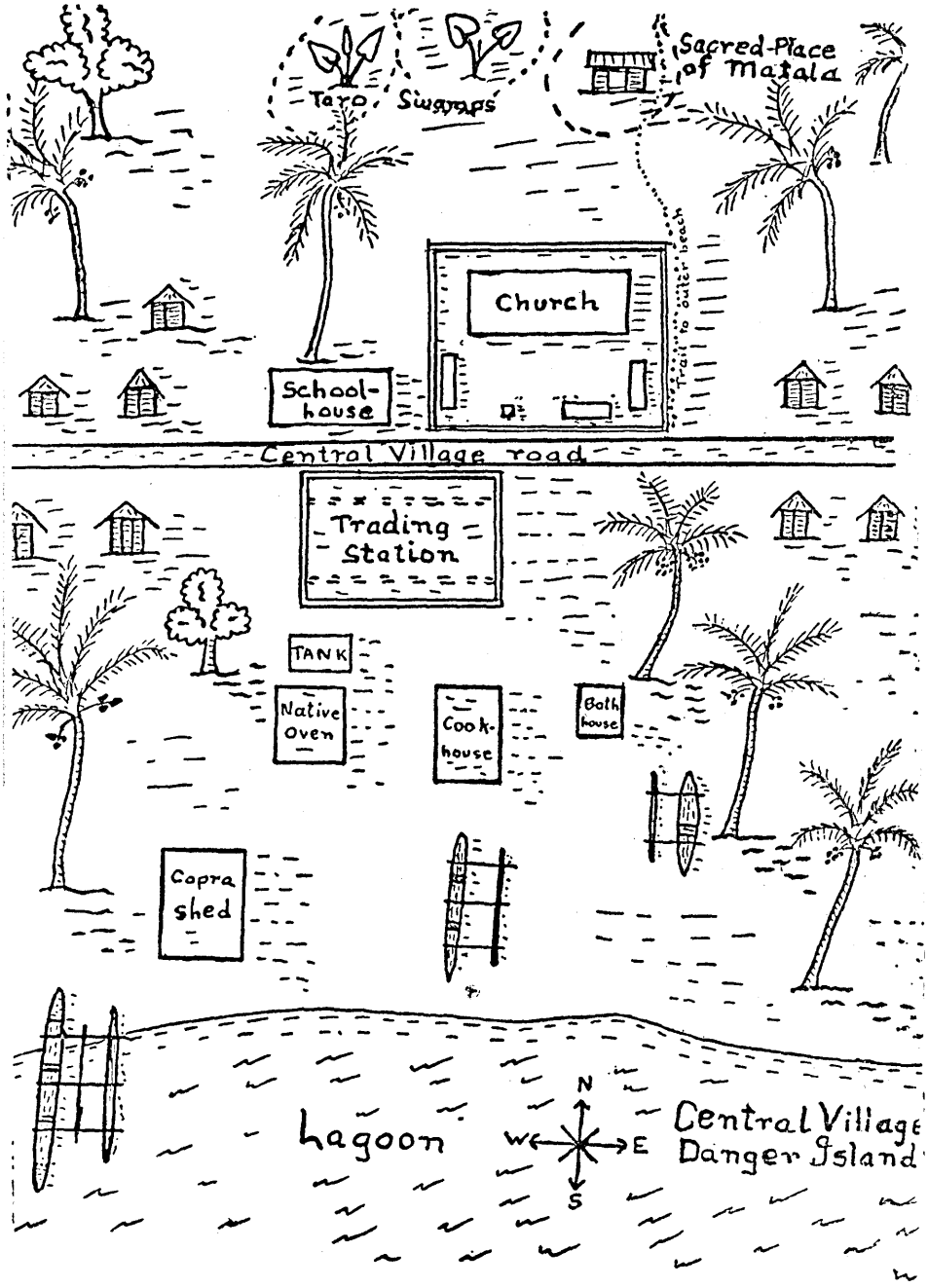
IN MEMORY OF MISS TEARS
DANGER ISLAND
JUNE 6TH, 1938

If he is left to himself, a neurotic is obliged to replace by his own symptom formations the great group formations from which he is excluded. He creates his own world of the imagination for himself, his own religion, his own system of delusions, and thus recapitulates the institutions of humanity in a distorted way. . . .

SIGMUND FREUD: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*


NORTH
Point of Smoking Seas
DANGER ISLAND
Lat. 10° 52' S. Long 165° 53' W.
(This chart not to be used for purposes of navigation)
COPRA-MAKERS' VILLAGE
Taro Beds
MAIN ISLET
Fish pond
Boat Passage
LEEWARD VILLAGE
WINDWARD VILLAGE
Shallows
Pacific Ocean
WEST
EAST
LAGOON
Shallows
MATAUEA POINT
KO ISLET
FRIGATE BIRD ISLET
Shallows
SOUTH


MAIN ISLET
North half
N
W
E
S
Point of Smoking Seas
Pacific Ocean
Shallows
Outer beach
Jonesy's Memory Stone
Copra-makers' Village
Taro Beds
Sacred Place of Malala
Central Village
Outer beach
Shallows
Shallows
fish pond
Causeway
Seafoam's house
Windward Village
Leeward Village
Bay
To Frigate Bird
MAIN ISLET
South half
Yato Point
To Ka Islet
Lagoon


Taro
Swamps
Sacred Place of Matala
Church
School-house
Central Village road
Trading Station
TANK
Native Oven
Cook-house
Bath house
Copra shed
Lagoon
N
W
E
S
Central Village
Danger Island

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CHARACTERS OF THIS BOOK

Javan Moonlight: trader of Danger Island
Bates: supercargo of *Cockroach Schooner*
The Captain of *Cockroach Schooner*
Reverend Johns: missionary to the Line Islands
Withers: governor of the Line Islands
Jonesy: a Slaver
Mrs. Johns: wife of Reverend Johns

Toa (Hero): Javan Moonlight's store-boy
Bones (Ivi): the leader of the primal horde
William (Uiliamu): the heathen retainer
The Name (Teingoa): the branch store-keeper
Sea Foam (Kare Moana): the parson
Ura: chief of police
Benny (Peni): the constable
Deacon Bribery (Tiatono Opeta): uncle of Miss Red-Jones
George (Tioti): bosom friend of Toa
Pau: the witch doctor
Deacon Yam (U'i): one of the hypochondriacs
Deacon Arrowroot (Pia): the other hypochondriac
King-of-the-Sky (Ariki-rangi): the loud-mouthed
The Bird (Temanu): son of King-of-the-Sky
Tioni: the youth who has been to Samoa
Letter (Rata): the village idiot
Leni: the Catholic catechist
Tiurai: a Tahitian physician
Kiri Welo: a bald-headed fisherman
Supercargo of Windward Village

Miss Red-Jones (Tioni-kura): the heroine of this love story
Miss Tears (Tangi): Miss Red-Jones's sister
Miss Tern (Tala): the vampire girl

Mama: Javan Moonlight's garrulous cook
Mrs. Sea Foam (Kare Moana Wawiné): wife of the parson
Mrs. The Name (Teingoa Wawiné): one of the trouble-makers
Bosun-woman (Potini-wawiné): the other trouble-maker

Ghost of Marcel Proust
Ghost of Charles Doughty
The Familiar Spirit of the Dawn

PART ONE

I

The Trader on One of His Majesty's Coral Atolls

The schooner called at Danger Island during the last week in April, to pick up Javan Moonlight's copra and to leave him a supply of trade goods. Supercargo Bates was aboard, sputtering and cursing, sneezing, coughing, and spitting, the bile from his liver tinting his temper as well as his skin. He introduced Javan to Mr. Withers, the new governor of the Line Islands, who was visiting his far-flung dependencies, as he called the little sun-baked atolls along the equator. The Reverend Johns and his wife were aboard also, as well as the usual number of native passengers. They were all put ashore in one of the reef boats. Bates put up with Javan; Withers went to stop with the chief of police in the government residency—which is no more than a thatched hut on the outer beach—while the Reverend and his wife stayed next door to the trading station, in Parson Sea Foam's coral-lime house.

Javan was very busy during the week the schooner was at Danger Island, what with Bates expecting him to weigh copra, keep the labourers working, balance the books, and take stock, all at the same time; and with the villagers begging him to open the cases of trade goods so they could gladden their eyes with a sight of the bright red print, ribbons, shiny mouth-organs, and such trash; and with Withers pestering him to interpret—though from this last he excused himself by sending his profane old retainer, William, in his place.

"I was so busy," Javan himself said when the schooner had sailed, "that there wasn't half a chance to take my regular siesta, or to go for a day's fishing, or even to spend

an afternoon cracking bottles of the Special No. IV brew with William and Benny."

Then warming to his subject, his long arms gesticulating with unnecessary vehemence: "These trading schooners are a curse," he growled. "Trading down here in the atolls would be a decent job if only the schooners would keep away. We get things going nicely in our stations, most of the lines sold out, the tobacco and matches gone, the copra weighed in, a mat spread on the counter, our cook resigned to silence and service, when the first thing we know it's 'Sail ho!' old *Cockroach Schooner* in the offing, Bates, the governor and the missionary ashore. Then everything is topsy-turvy with the governor telling the villagers they can't do things that way and they've got to do them this way, and the missionary shouting that everybody is sinning all the time, and Bates —oh Lord; wait till I tell you about Bates! Then there are more goods in the station to be sold, cases of matches and tobacco, an empty copra house to be filled again, brew finished, mat hid somewhere, the cook chattering her head off as she does everything wrong—bah! If only the schooners would keep away from these atolls trading would be a number one job!

"The supercargo makes things as bad as possible. He's one of those queer fellows who want to get things done in a hurry. From morning till night it's: 'Why ain't that silly old woman of yours got breakfast ready?' and 'Why ain't the store-boy got these cases unpacked?' and 'Why are all the labourers sitting under the trees smoking their pipes?' Then he will start cursing and making his eyes snap as he prances back and forth, his fingers twitching and his teeth grinding—until he sees Miss Tern, or Miss Red-Jones, or some other village maiden tripping along the beach, swinging her hips and doing immoral things with her eyes, when Bates will stop dead, grin in his foolish way, and give his moustache a fillip.

"All this shows you what a South Sea trader has to

contend against when the schooner is here: and it shows you why we are none too pleased to see her at all, while we are only too glad to have her sail away."

Javan remembers this particular week as a confusion of getting things done. "Getting things done!" he once exclaimed. "How stupid! I came to the South Seas to escape getting things done!"

The morning of the day that *Cockroach Schooner* sailed Javan tiptoed down to the cook-house while Bates was still snoring (how that fellow could snore!), hoping that he might have at least one bowl of coffee in peace. Then he felt a touch of conscience. It didn't seem hospitable or friendly to leave Bates to drink his coffee alone, so, contradicting his own maxim that more enemies are made at the breakfast table than on the field of battle, he sent Toa, his store-boy, to the sleeping balcony to waken the supercargo.

There was a snorting noise, a grunt; then: "Night or morning?" he heard Bates roar, Toa having wakened him with the statement that it was six o'clock.

"Hell's hole of creation!" Bates snarled a moment later, reaching, as Toa duly informed Javan, for the gin bottle and taking a long pull. "Get out of here, you grinning Kanaka! What the devil you want? I'm awake! Get!"

Presently, through the open sides of the cook-house, Javan saw him stumbling along the balcony and down the steps. He blew his nose, cleared his throat, washed his face with a sputtering noise, and tramped in the cook-house just as Mama was dishing up the eggs, while betimes Javan sat back forcing himself to smile, ready with a cheery "Good morning" should Bates set the example.

Happily, Bates omitted the greeting; but instead: "Why ain't they at work?" he growled as he slumped down in a chair, glanced toward the deserted copra house and at the same time reached out to jerk the coffee-pot toward him.

"It's Friday morning; they're still at church," Javan

replied, then waited for the inevitable explosion.

The explosion came. The villagers were a set of lazy, sanctimonious, praying Kanakas. They didn't go to church for any religious purpose but just to get out of work. Parson Sea Foam was keeping them in church this morning as long as possible, just to delay the ship. "When will they get through with their praying?" he wanted to know.

"In about an hour," Javan replied, maliciously glad to annoy the crack supercargo of the Line Islands Trading Company; but he added that, after breakfast, they would have to go home, attend family prayers, breakfast, change clothes, and have a smoke before they strolled to the copra house.

Bates's reply is best left to the imagination. It did not greatly annoy Javan, for he is accustomed to such sentiments, but it frightened dear old Mama, Javan's cook. Clad in a black lawn dress, her aged face wrinkled, perplexed, she stood tensely by the stove, with her mouth open slightly, her eyes troubled with apprehension. Were they about to fight, the noisy white man and Javan, her employer? White men were such strange and terrible creatures. Why did they shout and snarl and show their teeth, and strike the table with their fists until the coffee-cups rattled against their saucers? Ah me! It was nice to have the schooner here: Javan was so pleased when there were potatoes and onions in the cook-house. And after the ship had left it was nice to loiter in the trading station and stare at all the pretty flowered muslin, the bottles of perfume, the "smell soap," the bright red firecrackers; but on the other hand a ship brought great tribulation. Everybody had to work until he was quite tired, and the only thanks he got for it was a snarling noise from the supercargo; and then, again, after the ship had left there was always that terrible illness with a running nose and a cough that choked one. Ah me, ah me! Tra-la-la! and her thoughts flittered here and there and nowhere as Bates continued to pound the table and curse the villagers.

"Look at 'em!" he bellowed later in the day, pointing an accusing finger at a group of the kindly neighbours who were bagging copra in their own time-honoured way—leisurely. "The lazy Kanakas! They grin at you like a set of lunatics! What's that crooked-legged old fellow grinning at? Does he think I look funny?"

Javan being too courteous to reply in the affirmative, Bates went on, still with his attention on poor old Deacon Bribery: "Hey, you! What you grinning at? Get that bag of copra in the boat!" (Only Bates had used three "bloodies," which have here been omitted.)

The deacon made a feeble effort to lift the bag, but what with his crooked legs, his lumbago, and his rheumatism, he didn't feel quite up to it, so he nodded to two of the young men, who lifted the bag gingerly and placed it on his shoulders, whereupon he stumped down to the boat and dumped it. Unluckily the bag had not been securely tied; the rope yarn broke and the copra spilled out.

A noise between a roar, a snarl, and a sardonic laugh came from Supercargo Bates. "Danger Island!" he bellowed. "There's your Danger Island labourer! Look at him! Oh, Lord A'mighty! I'd go bug-house in a week if I had to live in this Hell's hole of creation!"

Deacon Bribery guessed that the supercargo was making some nasty remarks about him. He grinned a little and hung his head; but Javan could see that he felt pretty bad about it.

"They're not exactly efficient," Javan murmured; "but brace up, old man, you'll soon be away."

Just then Miss Red-Jones, Parson Sea Foam's pretty daughter, came tripping along the beach. Because it was schooner week she was modestly dressed in a gown of crimson print, and a wreath of flowers from the back of which her fine auburn hair shimmered down. In Javan's opinion Miss Red-Jones is the prettiest girl on the island. There is an exotic tilt to her eyes, suggestive of an epicanthic fold, which gives her a fascinating, Mongolian

expression; and from her genteel little nose to her neck, her breasts, her hips, and her ankles there is not a sharp angle nor an inharmonious curve. One-eighth white, her skin is smooth, silken, olive-brown, like the skin of a tanned European. She would hold her own among the beauties of any metropolis—either she or her younger sister, the exquisite Miss Tears.

Miss Red-Jones is formed to please the senses. When staring at her exotically tilted eyes (a boorish act which pleases all women), one looks for mystery, for depth of character, for singularly marvellous attributes of heliolithic forebearers; one fancies subtle, nameless qualities: virtues and vices undreamed of by conventionalised man. It requires acuity of a high order to perceive that Miss Red-Jones is simply a pretty maiden, full of carnal impulses which have not as yet crystallised into anything definite: a fascinating little female who is particularly desirable because she suggests to the senses that she will bear her husband fine children. The village lads, Javan's store-boy among them, are incapable of any such analyses, but they love Miss Red-Jones nevertheless.

Just then Miss Red-Jones came tripping along the beach. The supercargo's snarling expression relaxed into a leer, by a metamorphosis so slight as to be imperceptible and yet so complete as to be startling. "Not a bad little tart, *that!*" he exclaimed damply. "If I'm ashore another night I'll send your store-boy to get her for me."

"I'm afraid you won't have any luck," Javan told him. "Miss Red-Jones is a virgin."

Bates thought that was a fine joke. He laughed loudly and slapped his hand against his thigh, making such a noisy demonstration that all the labourers stopped work, while Miss Red-Jones turned to flash toward him one of her alluring smiles. "Virgin!" he shouted. "That's a good one! Do you really think there's a virgin in the South Sea Islands?"

"There are plenty of them here," Javan replied dryly.

"Every girl on the island remains a virgin until she is put through a ceremony known as *wakawawiné*."

"*Wakawawiné*—make into a woman, eh?" he translated readily enough, with another laugh. "That's another good one! I guess I know my Kanaka tarts. I guess I've made enough of them into women. Well, Mr. Moonlight, if I'm on Danger Island another night I'll *wakawawiné* your Miss Red-Jones!" This last had come with a general eructation of spitting and nose blowing.

His pride was saved a fall by his not being on Javan's island another night, for in spite of the indolent habits of the villagers the last of the copra was loaded during the evening tide. Shortly before sunset William, Toa, and Javan paddled Supercargo Bates across the shallows and the reef to the ship.

"You can have your Danger Island and all your brown brothers," Bates growled as he heaved himself aboard. "All I hope is that I never set foot on the place again." Then, with a leer, sitting astride the gunwale, one skinny leg hanging down on either side: "You're crazy as a bedbug," he said, and heaved his objectionable self on deck.

Javan was aboard only long enough to split a bottle of New Zealand ale with the captain and bid the lot of them a lukewarm farewell. Each one had something unpleasant to say about the island.

"Lord, but I'm glad to get away from this place," the captain grumbled. "A week to load sixty tons of copra! Curse of Satan! Your natives are the laziest in the South Seas!"

"One visit to Danger Island in a lifetime will do me," the governor said. "I've spent hours ashore, with that vulgar old fellow, William, as my interpreter, trying to explain to the Island Council that the land must be divided —parcelled out; but I doubt if a one of them was intelligent enough to grasp my point of view. As it is now, the land belongs to the people as a group. Silly arrangement, dating back to heathen times."

"What did the Island Council decide?" the Reverend Johns asked, with undisguised interest.

"Decide!" the governor exclaimed, his voice raised to a falsetto scream. "They didn't decide anything! They just grinned and stared at me, with their mouths open!" Then, a little later: "They are stupid savages without the slightest sense of the dignity of authority, of law, order, patriotism, or any other virtue. Fancy it, the pastor was the only man ashore who could tell me the date of the King's birthday!"

"From a churchman's point of view it is the most disappointing island in the group," the Reverend Johns sighed. "Time and time again I have admonished the people against immodesty. They are simply indecent; they have no sense of shame. I have told the men that they must not attend church in short-sleeved singlets, and the women that they must make their gowns extend to the ankles, with high necks and long sleeves—but I might as well talk to a stone wall, for they just stare at me, with their mouths open, as the governor says, grinning in their stupid way."

Mrs. Johns had even a lower opinion of Javan's neighbours. "I was never so shocked in my life," she said, her lips pursing. "With my own eyes I saw nakedness ashore! And I was told that the shameless creatures discard *all* their clothes and exhibit their sinful bodies the moment the ship sails away! And that May Day celebration! Shocking! Sacrilegious! The birth of Jesus given in their filthy mummery, just as though it had been the birth of one of their own brats! Oh! Oh!" and she tripped off to her cabin, her face red.

"I am glad you brought up the matter of the land division," the Reverend Johns said to the governor. Javan had finished his ale and risen to leave, but he waited at the cuddy doorway to hear what the reverend would say. "It is disgraceful that our missionary society does not own an inch of land on Danger Island. If they divide the island I hope you will see that the society obtains ample property for its needs. I brought the matter up in the deacons'

meeting, but they only said: *'Tia koé, tia koé'* (It's up to you, it's up to you), like natives always say when they do not wish to commit themselves."

"There'll be more copra if the land is divided," Bates said. "The people ain't got no ambition as it is, with everybody getting the same whack out of the copra money. If a man owns his own land he'll take good care of it, eat less coconuts, try to get as much off it as he can so as to make a better showing than his neighbours. You'll do lots more business, Mr. Moonlight."

"Yes," Javan muttered from his place in the doorway; "the people will become greedy, which will help trade."

"That's it exactly," Bates agreed, Javan's irony having passed at a high altitude above his head. "You got some sense, after all."

A moment later Javan said "Good-bye" and left.

"We're not coming back at the end of the year," the captain said as he followed Javan to the bulwarks. "We've got to go on the slip in New Zealand and get recoppered. You'll be a year this time, or maybe a little longer, before you see us again."

"Thank God for that!" Javan replied, amused that the captain had held back his information till the last moment. "The less I see of your schooner the better. But you might have told me before, so I could have taken a few more pounds of hops and another bag of corn sugar out of the trade-room." Then: "All right; I'll just have to cut down on William's brew, that's all," he said, and, scowling at his old retainer who sat in the stern sheets with eyes registering disapproval, he told him to paddle back to the reef. "Good-bye, the lot of you!" he shouted, and turned his head toward shore.

"How can Mr. Moonlight live in such a place?" the Reverend Johns said when the captain had returned. "He seems intelligent enough, in an eccentric way."

"It's simply because he's too lazy to face the world," the captain said.

"He's an introvert, and a very dangerous one," the governor opined.

"Why don't you say what you think?" Mrs. Johns snapped, emerging from her cabin. "He lives on Danger Island so he can drink his strong brew, and sin in other ways, without shame."

"You're all wrong," Bates told them. "I know the man. He's crazy as they make 'em, and that's all there is to it."

From then on they thought no more of Javan Moonlight, for the schooner was under way, and there were other islands to be visited and to be enlightened.

Meanwhile Javan and his men had started back for shore. When they had crossed the reef Toa jumped out to tow the canoe through the quarter mile of shallow water to Yato Point, and there, climbing aboard, he poled them along the beach until they were within the crescent-shaped bay, where, the water being deeper, they picked up their paddles and sent the canoe scudding to the beach behind the trading station. Not once had Javan Moonlight looked back; but now he glanced over his shoulder to see the black triangles of *Cockroach Schooner's* sails etched against the sombre evening sky, distant pyramids on the sea-desert vanishing toward a civilisation that to Javan was as remote in time and place as the civilisation of the Pharaohs. And then, for a little space, he wondered why he *did* live on Danger Island. Was everything here of as ensanguined a hue as Supercargo Bates had made it out to be; were the natives as immoral, lazy, and stupid as the passengers aboard the schooner had said they were? . . . Strange! . . . It had never seemed that way to him.

He walked slowly to the trading station. Now that the vessel had sailed he felt weary, crushed in spirit, and depressed. "We'll close the station for a few days," he said to Toa. "We'll live up to our reputation by being lazy till Monday morning."

Then he bathed in a tub of cold water from the underground tank. He bathed thoroughly, like the barrister in

Great Expectations, feeling that there was an urgent demand for the symbolic act of purification; and he told Mama to scrub the front balcony, where Bates had slept, with carbolic sand soap, so as to eliminate the miasma of foreign contact. This done, he climbed to the back balcony, which faces the lagoon, spread out a Manihiki mat, laid out pillows and a calico quilt, slipped into a suit of silk pyjamas, placed tobacco, matches, and a few books of a soothing nature close by, lay down and relaxed.

II

Conversation on the Back Balcony of the Trading Station

After drinking his coffee next morning Mr. Moonlight went to the store-room for a dozen bottles of the Special No. IV brew and, returning to the balcony, settled down for a trader's day of rest—beer and books ordinarily, but beer and letters to-day, for he had no more than glanced through his correspondence. One by one he read the letters, taking a glass of brew with each communication until William came tramping up the balcony stairs, when a glass for each of them was indicated. There was a long one from his Uncle Urban in which he said that England was finished because Egypt had decided something or other which neither Ireland nor Canada would stand for. Then there was one from his Aunt Adelina, telling about her two dogs, Chica and Yaqui.

"It appears, William," Javan said, "that Chica barely escaped being run over by a furniture van, while, quoting Aunt Adelina, 'Just now Yaqui has worms, and I'm going to take him to the vet this afternoon.' She says 'just now' and 'this afternoon,' but she wrote this letter on the eighteenth of last November. This makes her tense puzzling. I will reply to her letter; I will offer my congratulations on Chica's narrow escape, and my condolence over Yaqui's worms; but when she receives my letter it will be nearly two years since she wrote me. . . . Dear Aunt Adelina!" Javan muttered, raising his eyes to glance over the balcony railing to where the lagoon was spread with tinkling diamonds. "I can picture her as clearly as though she were before me. Aye, her and her two pups; and Uncle Urban, sitting by the radio, dining on a lettuce

sandwich as he reads a newspaper and listens to a jazz concert. . . . And here's a letter from Captain Williams of Nassau Island."

"Oh, that son of a gun!" William broke in, with a great guffaw.

Javan glanced at him sharply. The deep lines on his face were shadowed by the light from over the balcony railing. There were a few less wiry hairs on his chin than when Javan had first met him, fifteen years before, a few more wrinkles and a few less yellow snags of teeth. But he was still a powerful man, for all his eighty-odd years, straight as a youth, and with a fine hairy chest, as anyone could see, for he seldom bothered with such fopperies as shirts and singlets. For years William was the lone heathen on this otherwise thoroughly Christianised island; but recently he fell into grace by joining the Seventh Day Adventist Chapel. When the white missionary came on his yearly visit he was pleased that a hoary and long-recalcitrant lamb had at last entered the fold; but he thought that William should mend his ways: refrain from pork, coffee, scaleless fish, tobacco, and home-brew. William, however, just grinned and continued on his evil course. At times, though, when religious matters are stirring in the involved channels of his brain, he will come to the trading station to deliver long theological dissertations, original, humorous, and insincere. Javan enjoys them immensely; they are ample evidence that William is as heathen as ever.

"Oh, that son of a gun!" William guffawed, referring to Captain Williams of Nassau Island. "He's one no-good, son-of-a-gun fine feller, all right!" William had made this remark only as an excuse to remain and drink Javan's brew—an excuse of which he took advantage immediately by refilling his glass.

"Precisely, William; and he lives on Nassau Island, just fifty miles away—yet it has taken one year, four months, and two days for this letter to reach me. Look at this

envelope: it tells the tale. The letter was taken first to Samoa, then to Fiji, then to Australia, then to New Zealand, then to Rarotonga where it missed the last schooner but one. It lay in the Rarotonga post office for six or seven months, until *Cockroach Schooner* sailed again, when, after a voyage of six weeks, it reached me. And here is Williams telling me that his wife is going to have a baby. Goodness! The child is teething by now!"

Javan read a few more letters and drank a few more glasses of brew; then picking up the last one, from his friend the literary critic, he read aloud: " 'I can picture you watching with equanimity the dawn intensifying to high noon, and on to the slow dark of the tropics, twiddling betimes your thumbs with a gentle rhythmic motion. . . .' How do you like that, William?"

"That's it, all right, all right," the ignorant fellow said.

"It is nothing of the kind," Javan snapped. "This critic who has nothing to do but read books and write about them, has the erroneous idea that I am indolent. If he could have seen me during schooner week! Or if he could see me when I open the trading station!" Javan stopped abruptly, and drew such a long face that William reached for the brew bottle and filled both their glasses; then, the maliciousness of his words in sharp contrast with the humanity of his act: "You got to open the trading station pretty soon," he said, and grinned viciously.

"Don't speak of it!" Javan cried. "This is my day of rest; don't spoil it!"

"Well, you're the trader of Danger Island," William grunted as he raised his glass and eyed the froth critically.

"*The* trader of Danger Island!" Javan exclaimed with irony. "Trading is my excuse for living here, that is all. Do you think I am one of those sordid, commercial persons who live on islands simply to make money?"

"Why *do* you live on Danger Island?" William asked. The old heathen was not in the least interested in this

question, but he has learned, through long experience, that when Javan is discussing at length on one of his favourite topics there is virtually no interdiction on the amount of brew he, William, is permitted to drink.

"The men aboard the schooner," Javan replied, "believe I live here because I am indolent and a trifle mad, and because I like to drink home-brew and seduce maidens, unmolested."

"Yes; that's right," the old man muttered.

"What is right?" Javan snapped, "that they have this idea, or that I live on Danger Island because of these reasons?"

For a moment William blinked in profound thought; then, because he was thinking about how the station would be opened soon, and he would be wanting credit, he made a non-committal reply: "Yes; I think so," he said.

"Well, William, I have been wondering why I *do* live on Danger Island, and I have come to the conclusion that it is because I belong, spiritually, to the race of nomads that no longer can find wild steppes over which to roam. A few hundred years ago I might have found escape among the conquerors of Hernando Cortez, a thousand years ago I might have been on a Nicæan barque, sailing 'astonished among the stars,' before that I might have been circumnavigating Africa with the Phœnicians; but as it is, I am obliged to satisfy in the realm of the spirit my nomadic craving for freedom, romance, and adventure, and I find Danger Island congenial to this spiritual life."

William lit his pipe and settled back comfortably on a corner of the mat. He is accustomed to Javan's garrulity; it does not bore him but simply gives him an excuse to rest his bones while pretending to listen. Moreover, as he once admitted, Javan's well-modulated soliloquies stimulate his own flow of thought, though in an entirely different channel; for when Javan is declaiming on his Moonlight cosmology William's own thoughts will be on the problem of inducing the store-boy to chop wood for

him. Javan, on the other hand, finds it necessary to talk to someone, and so, there being no mirror in the establishment large enough to furnish him with an adequate image of a long-faced man with large lustreless eyes, he, like the Cape Cod atheist to the chickens, preaches to William.

On this occasion William lit his pipe, gave Javan a considerate glance, and: "Yes," he said, "I think it's a good thing."

"William," Javan went on, "a psychologist once told me that I am spending my life attempting to escape from *the* father. He had put stress on the article 'the' so that I should not confuse it was the pronoun 'my.' Also, he said that I found Danger Island a sanctuary because there I escaped from the coercive influences of modern society which unconsciously I associated with the coercion of *the* father. This is obscure reasoning, but when one sums it up in relation to everyday life it means only that officiousness and coercion are intolerable, and so one has come to Danger Island for more personal freedom—a sort of anarchistic gesture of the non-bomb-throwing variety.

"Take my Uncle Urban as an example of the effect of this coercion. Years ago, when I knew him on the farm, he was mentally alert; to-day he is mentally stagnant. He states that he is a mystic, that his thoughts cannot be put into words; but I am convinced that his mind has become atrophied by letting other people think for him. When he told me that his thoughts were too profound to be carried in the clumsy vehicle of speech it occurred to me that often I had avoided, with the same excuse, the effort to make some budding idea blossom into a sentence. My Uncle Urban, I believe, experiences the first pang of an intellectual labour; then, albeit it would gratify him to give birth to a well-rounded periodic baby, he will experience the 'blocking psychosis' that psychologists tell us about. And my uncle, instead of mastering it and going through with the parturition, escapes by forcing himself

to believe that the pang was the result of a visitation from the Holy Ghost with some impression too subtle for birth in words—then he'll turn on the radio and forget about it.

"Now, William, I doubt if there is a psychic impression which cannot be expressed in words."

"Yes, that's right," William commented, blinking thoughtfully. Then he asked if Javan would go to the meeting of the Village Fathers to-night.

"I am relaxing," Javan replied testily. "You know I never leave my mat when I am relaxing. . . . As I was saying, I know my Uncle Urban could express his mystic thoughts in words, but he never will, and this is because he has formed the habit of letting other people think for him; and this is what I mean by the subtler form of coercion. I have often heard my uncle say: 'I know it is true because I read it in the newspaper,' or 'I heard it over the radio.' Such a statement exhibits a condition of intellectual stagnation. Read it in the newspaper! I was once a newspaper reporter, and I blush when I recall the inaccuracies, both intentional and otherwise, that I allowed to vitiate my stories. I firmly believe that the world would be better off if it had no newspapers or radio.

"The mental stagnation of civilised man is infectious. Back in 1929, while stopping with my Uncle Urban, I found myself spending more time each day at the radio or reading the newspapers. It was an insidious habit so easy to form; it was so restful just to listen, to read, and not disturb a single brain-cell. I found myself allowing the radio and the newspapers to think for me! I even found myself believing the claims of a certain class of advertisers.

"William, you are nodding, and just when I have something important to say. After perusing the advertisements and reading the 'Health Talks' in the newspapers that thoughtful friends send me I often ask myself if we atoll-dwellers are not living by the grace of a miracle. I note that one cannot live without certain foods, mineral waters,

nostrums, and cosmetics. I learn that it is suicidal to omit the tri-daily tooth-brushing convention with therapeutic and salutiferous preparations, or the twice-daily eye-lotioning, nose-spraying, throat-gargling, ear-syringing with specific articles which are guaranteed under the Pure Food and Drugs Act, which cost $4.99 a bottle, and which were unknown at the time of Noah. It is remarkable that, though no one of these blessings has as yet reached Danger Island, we are all alive and in tolerable health. There is something phony in the living contradiction of a people who are strong and healthy albeit they have never even heard of the common necessaries of life; and there is something phony in the fact that there are human beings on earth when we recall that at the time of Noah no one of the necessaries was necessary or even known.

"We nomads who, since the filling up of the Mediterranean basin, have been wandering under the stars, thinking our own remarkable thoughts, resent this indirect coercion: we fear it, and, not having sufficient will-power to combat its persistent suggestive influence, we try to escape: we come to Danger Island."

"Yes, that's right—Danger Island," William muttered sleepily; then: "I t'ink Miss Red-Jones go to the outer beach to-night, oh yes."

"Really!" Javan exclaimed, for a moment diverted from his subject. "But she is a virgin."

The old man sighed and scratched his chin. "Even Mama was a virgin once," he muttered profoundly. "You were speaking of Danger Island, Javan." This last with unusual courtesy as he refilled his glass.

"I was speaking of indirect coercive influence," Javan snapped. "I was trying to explain why I live on this miserable bank of sand. . . . Now, William, in the old days the nomadic people found in their mode of life freedom from coercion as well as ample opportunity to express their aggressive impulse. There were many brawls between the wandering families, feuds, raids against the gregarious

people, and, when great leaders rose amongst them, there were wars. Later on, when nomadism became impracticable due to traffic laws and fenced vegetable gardens, these men found spiritual fulfilment in exploration, conquest, and frontier life; but to-day, with no natural channels for their aggressive impulse, they have metamorphosed into the criminal class.

"I do not mean that I am a criminal, but potentially I am one; and I have escaped such a profession only by finding one of the few places left on earth where one may express one's individuality. Though I belong to the nomad-criminal class I have gained more freedom than has the civilised criminal. I have not been forced to contend against the law. . . . Are you following me, William?"

"Oh, yes," the old man replied, blinking as he glanced down toward the cook-house where Mama was tra-la-la-ing over her potato peeling.

"Very well. To divert these nomad criminals to a more social way of life we should give them more freedom instead of making more laws to control them and, consequently, antagonise them. Their criminal activities are simply a protest against an objectionably officious government. In one of my magazines there is an article which tells of a 'Public Enemy Number One' who, while courting his girl friend, was disturbed in an objectionable manner by a policeman. Like any self-respecting Tartar he shot the policeman, and he was hanged for it. My sympathies are with this particular criminal. Had we less officious policemen there would be less occasion to shoot them.

"The crime problem would be settled in a day were I Dictator of the World. I would simply take Mexico from the Mexicans (it is not of the slightest use to them), and deport there all the criminals of the world. I would make it obligatory that there be no laws—a law to end laws, eh? —nor government of any kind. This would prevent the criminals from settling down in cities: it would force them

into the nomadic life that would be good for their souls. Conditions would be perfect for a few hundred years: they could steal women and caravans, cut throats, burn villages, and make raids across the border, thus in a normal way expressing their aggressive impulse. In a few centuries a great leader would rise among them, and instead of diverting his genius to racketeering, he would unite the various tribes, when, like the Tartars in Asia, they would sweep across the United States to conquer, subject, and eventually be assimilated by the urbanised and standardised Americans. This would be a salutary change, just as it was salutary when the nomadic tribes conquered Egypt, Persia, Babylon, Sumer. They revived decadent civilisations. However, William, I have little hope that any such innovation will be effected. We shall continue to have our great criminal class, and I shall continue to live on Danger Island."

"Yes; you live on Danger Island," William said. "Plenty coconut, plenty wifes, no work." Then he reached for the last bottle of brew, opened it, and refilled his glass.

"I believe—aye, all but know—that we refugees from civilisation are of the nomadic blood; and to-day, the government being unwilling to segregate us in Mexico, we dash headlong toward any sanctuary that will offer us freedom of spirit. Some of us become criminals, some go to sea in little boats, some become aviators, fishermen, lighthouse keepers, factors in the Far North; a handful of us have fled from a hive-like world to the few remaining atolls in the Pacific.

"But even here we have not completely escaped, for twice a year strange faces appear: faces of frustrated men eager to assert themselves—men who are too insignificant to force their wills on their own people, and who, therefore, come to the South Seas to tell us that we are sinners, and that we must wear long-sleeved singlets in church; to tell us that we are stupid, and that we must divide the community-owned land. Happily, these faces appear only

twice a year, but it is often enough to remind us that we cannot escape altogether from the coercion, which unconsciously we associate with *the* father, of modern, enlightened man."

"The governor said they got to divide the land whether they want to or not," William said, Javan's last words having caught his attention.

Javan sighed. He felt that he had been wasting his breath on the heathen. "And what did they say to that?" he asked.

"Oh, they no savvy much, nohow," William replied, switching versatilely to his own brand of whalerman English. "Hell! Goddamn! Go ta Hell! When the governor say to them: 'Nevva mind, oh yes, you got to divide the land, sure t'ing,' I tell them the governor say: 'Maybe-so good t'ing divide the land. What you t'ink?' I say it this-a-way so they don't get mad. Then all the councilmans say the governor all-the-same one big damn fool, so I tell the governor the councilmans say he too much savvy everyt'ing. Oh, yes, I savvy."

"Just a little diplomacy, eh, William?"

"Oh, I savvy, all right," William admitted. "All-the-same governor, I savvy everyt'ing."

"It's lucky that you were the interpreter," Javan muttered. "Otherwise the councilmen might have had some idea as to what the governor was talking about."

"Well," William said, relapsing into the local idiom, "the councilmen know that the land must be divided, and they are going to talk about it at the big meeting to-night —after they have made into a woman Miss Red-Jones."

"What's that, William?"

"*Wakawawiné!* Whas a matta? You loco? They make Miss Red-Jones into a woman to-night, sure t'ing. She's plenty old enough now to go with the boys at night on the outer beach."

William then picked up each of the brew bottles and held it to the light to ascertain that it was empty; then,

with a grunt of disgust, he left, while Mr. Moonlight, rolling over so his back would be to the light, picked up a volume of *A la Recherche du Temps perdu,* by Marcel Proust, a French author.

III

Toa and Miss Red-Jones Make Love on the Outer Beach

Javan Moonlight claims that it takes years of patient study to appreciate the finer shadings of Mama's character; and he is convinced that of all the six hundred and fifty people on Danger Island only he and William really understand her. He is obliged to extend reluctantly to William an equal share in this honour, the heathen having been Mama's profane and unfaithful spouse for something like fifty years, but in the bottom of his heart he doubts that even William appreciates, as nicely as he, many of the finer shadings in the old lady's character.

Mama is only in her seventies, but she looks her age, and it, with charming ingenuousness and great wisdom of the Danger Island order, permits her to confide in Javan gossip secret, scandalous, and erotic. One need not describe fully her remarkable structural peculiarities, for she will appear often in the course of this love story, and she will not fail to describe herself, physically and spiritually, through her singular manner of speech.

On the second day of Javan's period of relaxation he came down to the cook-house at the first crack of dawn, for Mama is one of those rare—aye, all but extinct servants who kindle their fires before daylight so early risers may have breakfast just when the first sunlight is silvering the trade-wind clouds, but long before it has dissipated the pleasant gloom in the coconut groves.

This Sunday morning, in spite of the troubling awareness that he must start trading on the morrow, he was in fine spirits. The rest had refreshed his soul; he had almost

forgotten that such things existed as supercargoes, missionaries, and governors. Mama knew she might speak as soon as Javan had gulped down his first bowl of coffee, so: "There was a terrible thing happened last night on the outer beach," she said in a tone of reminiscence, as though speaking to herself, but in fact ascertaining beyond all shadow of doubt the state of Javan's temper. She gave a little sigh, broke an egg in a bowl, tossed it out the window, and thoughtfully placed the eggshell in the frying-pan. She discovered her mistake when salting and peppering the shell, but it did not disturb her: she was quite capable of serving Javan the shell on the assumption that he would not know the difference. However, being accustomed to her own absent-mindedness, she shrugged her shoulders in a way expressive of, "What—again?" tipped the frying-pan so the eggshell fell in the fire, then broke another egg, and this time, by keeping her mind concentrated on her art, cooked it to a turn.

"Something terrible happened, Mama," Javan said, thus verifying that he might be addressed.

She slipped the egg on a plate, set it before her employer, and then, sitting on the bench across the table, confided: "A terrible fight! One of the worst we've ever had—and they only young innocent children, too! Now, if it had been old women like Bosun-woman and Mrs. The Name —you know, Javan, they always fight on Christmas Day, even though the Reverend Johns said they shouldn't, it being one of the holy days, and because it is sinful to fight except when the king calls you. . . ."

"Mama, Mama! There has been a fight. Who has been fighting, and what did they fight about?"

"Why, Javan!" Mama gasped with feigned surprise. "Haven't you heard about Toa and Miss Red-Jones, and Toa your own store-boy and Miss Red-Jones the parson's daughter?"

"How should I hear about them?" Javan growled as he sipped the hot fragrant coffee. "Do you think I have

nothing better to do than snoop around looking for scandal?"

"Yes, Javan, that's right: you never know what is happening on your own island. If it wasn't for me you would be as ignorant as those Papuan cannibals the Reverend Johns told us about—those terrible cannibals who eat poor little babies and never go to church. Oh, Javan! You never go to church, but you wouldn't eat poor little babies, like those ignorant cannibals who never go to church, would you, Javan? . . . But I was telling you something. . . . Oh, yes—Toa and Miss Red-Jones. It's so hard to remember things when you make your eyes angry. . . . I suppose you don't even know about the council meeting?"

"Go on, go on; I'm listening," Javan said testily. "Look at the light on the lagoon, Mama! It is volatile! It is translucent! It moves and shimmers! Mottlings of white cloud reflected in a pink inland sea! It reminds me of the strawberry ice-cream sundaes we used to have in Stanford, where I went to school. . . ."

"At the council meeting," Mama said hurriedly (Javan had known she would speak if he urged her enough) "—at the council meeting Toa said they should divide the land. Toa was made into a man last month, you know, so he had a right to speak—that is, they let him speak a little so they could laugh at him. Toa said they shouldn't divide the land because it wasn't a good thing—only he gave some other reasons too. Then all of the old men started to laugh, and they called him a 'hairless one.' Wasn't that terrible, Javan, to call him a 'hairless one,' and Toa a man, too? He was very angry when they said that. He glanced at Miss Red-Jones, and he stamped his foot three times, and told them it was a lie. Just think, Javan: how would you feel if people said things like that about you—called you a 'hairless one'? But then you are such a cold, hard man: you're not like Toa, who is strong and handsome and full of love for Miss Red-Jones. Then . . . then . . . what was I saying, Javan?"

"Toa said it was a lie," Javan prompted, for of course he is accustomed to her habit of discursive expression.

"Oh, yes; then Toa said something, and they laughed again, and Bones called him a fledgling and told him to wait till his tail feathers had sprouted. . . . You know, Javan, a little bird hasn't any tail feathers at all, so it can't fly . . . had sprouted,"—this time she picked up the thread of her story without prompting—"and then he might talk to the Village Fathers. Poor Toa! He's such a handsome youth, and Miss Red-Jones is so in love with him—or anyway she was in love with him, but I don't know what she thinks after last night."

"Yes, Mama," Javan sighed as he lit his first cigarette and sipped his third bowl of coffee. "Toa has been ridiculed. What did he do?"

"Oh, he wasn't frightened at all; but he was very angry, because Miss Red-Jones was there, and she had heard what they said about him. Toa got so angry he nearly cried, and Miss Red-Jones's breath came in little gasps. Everybody noticed it; and they all started talking about what would happen after she had been made into a woman. Toa threw his arms up in the air, and he shouted: 'Village Fathers, we must think of the children! If we divide the land the children of a large family will be paupers! We must think of the children—*our children!*' He shouted this as loud as he could, just as I am doing now, so he must have been very angry and Miss Red-Jones was so proud of him that she started crying. Then Mrs. Sea Foam said: 'Why is my daughter crying, and why does her breath come in little gasps?' Then everybody laughed again, and Mrs. Sea Foam laughed too, but she shouldn't have done that, for she is the wife of Parson Sea Foam, and isn't supposed to laugh. Anyway, the Reverend Johns says it's sinful to laugh too much, especially for parsons and their wives to laugh too much. . . ."

"Mrs. Sea Foam laughed too," Javan broke in. He poured his last bowl of coffee, flavoured it with a spoonful

of cognac, and settled back to listen, no matter where Mama led him.

"Just as I was telling you," Mama said crossly. "Then that loud-mouthed man, King-of-the-Sky, shouted: 'Where are your children, little half-a-man? Wait till you have shown your manhood before you talk, chick!' and all kinds of mean things until by and by Toa couldn't stand it any longer. Poor Toa! He's so good-looking and so full of love for Miss Red-Jones; and any girl would love him—but maybe not after what happened last night. . . . Oh, yes; then he broke into tears and rushed out of the council meeting. Miss Red-Jones tried to follow him, but Mrs. Sea Foam caught her by the hair, because she hadn't been made into a woman yet, and she couldn't follow Toa until that was done.

"You know, Javan," Mama went on, her eyes subtle with the wisdom of an old woman, "the Reverend Johns said they shouldn't make girls into women like the Danger Island people do, because it is sinful to be naked if you let people see that you haven't any clothes on. And he said that they should just say that the girls have become women, and that's all. So when they told Miss Red-Jones to show herself so they could see whether or not she had really become a woman Parson Sea Foam objected a little, but not very much. That was because the Reverend Johns had said. . . . But I told you that. . . . So he didn't object more than enough to show that he was parson. Then Miss Red-Jones showed herself to the Village Fathers, and when they had looked at her they said that she was a woman, all right. After that they told Sea Foam to finish making her into a woman, but Sea Foam refused because the Reverend Johns had told him that it is sinful to wear grass skirts because they don't cover the breasts. When I was a girl it wasn't sinful to let the young men see what beautiful breasts we had, for the Reverend Johns hadn't come to the island, and we didn't know about sin. We were just ignorant heathens, Javan, like those Papuan cannibals who

eat poor innocent babies and never go to church. . . ."

"Mama! Collect your thoughts! Sea Foam wouldn't put a grass skirt on Miss Red-Jones."

"Yes, Javan; just as I was telling you before you interrupted me. So her uncle, Deacon Bribery, wrapped a grass skirt around her, and he said: 'Now you are a woman,' just like that. Then Sea Foam prayed to Jehovah to watch over his beloved daughter—that's what he called her, and also a handmaiden—and to keep her a virgin until she was married in church with a veil and white shoes.

"So Miss Red-Jones was made into a woman last night, and of course she left the council meeting right away and went to the outer beach where Toa and his bosom friend George were waiting for her. All the rest of the young unmarried were there, too. They sang and they danced for a little while, because the moon was on the wane, and until it rose they couldn't do anything else, because it is dangerous to go in the shore bush before moonrise when the moon is on the wane."

"Evil spirits, eh, Mama?"

"Of course; and they have been making all kinds of trouble lately, though when I was a girl they weren't so bad. I remember when William and I . . . but I'll tell you that some other time . . . what was I saying, Javan?"

"They are on the outer beach, woman, dancing, singing, and waiting for the moon to rise."

"Yes, that's right; I remember now. The Reverend Johns says there aren't any evil spirits, and that we think so because we are ignorant and don't know much like the Reverend Johns. But he has never been in the magnolia bushes before moonrise, or else he'd say that maybe on Danger Island it's different."

"I can fancy the Reverend Johns sneaking in the shore bush with the young unmarried," Javan muttered, chuckling.

"Oh, of course he wouldn't. Mrs. Johns wouldn't let him. She's terribly jealous. When they were here last time,

walking through Leeward Village, Miss Tern ran past them to the beach, and she didn't have her clothes on because she was going to bathe. Then the Reverend Johns started staring at her like white men do, and Mrs. Johns screamed, 'Thomas!' like that, 'Thomas!' showing how jealous she was. . . . But I know Miss Tern wouldn't want the Reverend Johns: he's not strong and handsome like Toa."

"Mama, Mama!" Javan sighed. "They are on the outer beach, and the waning moon is rising."

"Yes," Mama resumed; "after they had sung and danced for a little while the moon came up. They were singing that song about Captain Blackbeard, and Toa was sitting beside Miss Red-Jones with his arm around her—and by and by, when the moon was above the horizon clouds, Toa tied a picture handkerchief around Miss Red-Jones's neck, to show that she was his, and then they got up and moved toward the magnolia bushes. But they had only taken a few steps when suddenly Miss Tern, that shameless girl, jumped to her feet and looked hard at Miss Red-Jones—just as you look at me before you've had your first bowl of coffee—and she shouted so everybody could hear her: 'You're a man-stealer!' just like that '—a man-stealer!' Wasn't that mean of her, Javan? No!—don't answer; I haven't finished yet. She shouted this because she wants Toa for her husband. But Toa doesn't want her—that is, he doesn't want her any more, now that Miss Red-Jones had been made into a woman.

"Then Miss Red-Jones threw back her head and looked at Miss Tern just as hard as Miss Tern had looked at her, and she shouted back: 'I didn't steal your man! You're a woman greedy-for-men!'

"Then Miss Tern screamed: 'He was mine first!' Wasn't that a mean thing to say, Javan? Miss Red-Jones felt terrible when Miss Tern said that. She pushed Toa away, and she ran toward Miss Tern; but when she had taken a few steps she stopped suddenly and burst into tears. Poor

dear! How wicked it was of Miss Tern to make Miss Red-Jones cry! So Toa ran to her and tried to put his arms around her, but she pushed him away again, and she cried that she would never love him any more because he had been making love to Miss Tern, and Miss Tern was a girl greedy-for-men, and that she would pull her hair out and scratch her face some day.

"Now, Javan," Mama continued, with a wise old smile, "Miss Red-Jones knew all about Toa having made love to Miss Tern, but it made her feel bad to have Miss Tern tell her about it. So she started crying again, terribly, and when Toa tried once again to put his arm around her she flung him away, like that—" and here Mama made a sweeping gesture with her right arm. Then, as she righted the upturned milk-jug, "Oh, it was terrible!" she exclaimed. "Everybody is talking about it. When Miss Red-Jones got home Sea Foam had heard about it. . . . Of course, Javan, all the neighbours had heard about it, because one of the young unmarried had come running to the village with the news. It was Wili, the man who lives in Leeward Village, and is so proud on account of his spectacles with coloured glasses."

"Parson Sea Foam had heard all about it," Javan growled as he lit another cigarette, then leaned back against the cook-house wall to smoke it slowly.

"Yes; and he was terribly angry because Miss Red-Jones had been fighting. He shouted some things out of the Bible, and he told Miss Red-Jones that he would whip her then and there. Then he rushed to the cook-house and got a big club about a fathom long and as big round as your arm, and he swung it over his head and got madder and madder. I was afraid he might kill her."

"So you were there?"

"Of course; we were all there, along the mission-yard wall. Didn't I tell you that Wili had come running to the village to tell us about the fight, and so didn't we all hurry to Sea Foam's house to find out what would happen when

Miss Red-Jones got home? I think you were the only one who wasn't there, Javan—but then you never know what is happening on your own island. Why, Bosun-woman and some others went right up to Sea Foam while Wili was telling him about the fight. They pretended they wanted to talk about dresses and fish and church and things, but really they wanted to be where they could see everything nicely when Miss Red-Jones returned, so . . . so . . . so. . . ."

"Mama, Mama; Sea Foam is swinging the great war club over his head and getting madder and madder."

"So we were sure he was going to whip her; but after a little while Miss Red-Jones started crying again, so of course Sea Foam felt sorry and didn't whip her at all. He went back to the cook-house and laid down the club—it wasn't a war club, like you said, Javan: it was just one of those clubs you use to kill turtles with—and then, and then. . . . Oh yes! he got a piece of flying fish and a coconut, and he gave them to her and said she mustn't fight any more because it was sinful, and if she ever did it again he wouldn't let her go to the outer beach. Then we all knew that nothing more would happen, so we went home. Wasn't it terrible, Javan?"

"Terrible, Mama!"

"And she the parson's daughter!"

IV

A Trader's Sunday

Just then the church bell rang for early-morning service. Mama, who was properly dressed, picked up her blue silk parasol and hurried out of the cook-house. As usual of a Sunday morning, Javan turned so as to sit crosswise on his chair, and with one arm on its back and the other on the table (where also he had placed his feet), he glanced through the open sides of the house toward the village road, where the neighbours were passing on their way to church. There was Miss Tern. She seemed self-conscious this morning—not because of the dress of flowered muslin that fitted snugly, showing to the church-goers that she had quite as slim a waist as Miss Red-Jones, but because of the fight. At least, so Javan surmised.

Miss Tern has the Semitic features one finds now and again among the Polynesians. There is no hook to her nose—not a suggestion of it—but there is a Semitic cast to her large, liquid eyes, spaced far apart and of the deep brown that merges into black, Miss Tern belongs to the spiritual type. With the slim lines of a virgin Psyche, breasts jutting and firm, hips only wide enough to break happily the straight lines of her body, her face æsthetically thin but not emaciated, one fancies her mind, like that of a vestal, intent on keeping the flame of purity alight. And yet she is the most amoral girl on the island. It is often so. These shapely maidens who with calmness and purity look one straight in the eye, who suggest that they are about to inquire after the condition of one's soul, who speak in mellow flute-like notes, pray fervently and sing psalms—are not to be trusted. They belong to the dangerous type

of woman particularly attractive to Javan Moonlight. This morning he sighed as he watched Miss Tern passing along the road, her hips rigid on a line with her body, but her eyes, behind their long, interlaced lashes, wantonly scanning the cook-house.

She was followed by The Name, Javan's branch storekeeper, a tall, skinny, miserly man who, like Job, is preparing for himself a mansion in heaven by suffering from chronic boils in the mundane life. One need not speak further of him here. Being Toa's father, he will appear often in the course of this love story—as will Bones, who shuffled along a few paces behind him.

Though no more than forty, Bones is the terrible old man of Danger Island—old not in years but in experience of a carnal nature. He might be called either ugly or handsome. To Javan there is something about him which causes physical revulsion, and so, without correlating between cause and effect, he states that Bones is ugly. But to another observer he might be considered handsome in the same way that a bull is handsome. There is no finely chiselled Greek profile, no elegant proportions: he is stocky, rugged, long-limbed, hairy, a living exemplification of masculinity.

Bones never dresses well, not even when attending divine services (which last is solely for the purpose of ogling the women). This morning he was clad in a pair of ragged dungarees and a singlet which was more holes than cloth. He does not need fine clothes, however, to lure his many mistresses to his cave. With a sweep of his arm, embracing the female inhabitants, he can virtually say: "All have been generous to Bones." When last in North America, Javan had bought him a thoroughbred Yorkshire boar pig with a corkscrew tail and stiff bristles on his neck. Bones carried him in his arms until he became too hefty, then started leading him about on a leash of sennit. This last was soon demonstrated as unnecessary, for when it broke the boar pig followed Bones as unerringly as though

he were led. It became evident that there was a coarse type of affinity between them.

As Javan says: "There is something both sinister and fascinating about Bones. I fancy that a woman would forever remember his carnal love as an adventure terrible and desirable. Perhaps she would remember it with the same horrible thrill that our great-great-grandmothers remembered the public executions they were accustomed to witness. Yes; I believe I can understand it in a hazy way. She would be fascinated as a rabbit is fascinated by a serpent. Perhaps there would be something masochistic about it, or something harking back to the fear and veneration of the Old Man of the Palæolithic Age—the Terrible Old Man, long-limbed, powerful, virile as a bull—and on the other hand, the timid yet desiring maiden. A strange and terrible contrast engendering an overwhelming impulse: Bluebeard, Henry VIII, Casanova (Bones could have taught them a lot), each ugly to coarseness, masculine, sinisterly fascinating!"

But Bones has passed into the church, while even now Deacon Bribery is shooing the Yorkshire boar pig out of the yard; and presently, with the church bell ringing its final call, Parson Sea Foam passes along the road, followed in single file by the ample Mrs. Sea Foam, the Misses Red-Jones and Tears.

The parson always comes last to church, and the bell is supposed to continue ringing until he has entered the building, when the service commences.

Sea Foam also is an important character in this love story, because he is both Javan's landlord and the father of Miss Red-Jones. The parson has been growing fat of late years, and as his waistline has increased from too rich living, his liver has increased correspondingly. Though his patient flock, gathering in the big mausoleum-like church, is obliged to listen to his frenzied threatenings of Hell-fire and the devil—threatenings actuated by bile more than by conviction—still he never fails to approach Javan

with great deference. This list is solely for the purpose of warming the cockles of Javan's heart preparatory to a suggestion about raising the rent.

As Javan himself says, Sea Foam should be taken in a charitable way, for he has much to contend against. For instance, of late years there has been spreading on the crown of his head a bald spot. It distresses him, for baldness on Danger Island is a subject for disrespectful witticism. In ancient times there was a man whose head was so preposterously bald that on his death the people decided he should be immortalised; so this same man, Kiri Welo, was personified in the sky in the Praesepe cluster, which to this day is called The Bald Head of Kiri Welo (Te Pa Ngolé-Ngolé à Kiri Welo). Only a few days before the arrival of *Cockroach Schooner* Sea Foam had preached of the irreverence of Letter, the village idiot, who, being deaf and dumb, had made a sign-name for "Sea Foam." Thus Letter would rub his hand on the top of his head, like a man polishing brass, which meant "Bald Head," which in turn meant "Sea Foam."

On this Sunday morning Javan has no eyes for Sea Foam nor for Mrs. Sea Foam nor even for the exquisite little Miss Tears, for Miss Red-Jones is dazzling! Now that she has a lover she is giving more attention to her toilet. Her gold-tinged hair, formerly a tangle, has been combed till it shimmers against the background of blue voile dress—blue and gold in the pink refulgence of the dawn! Her hair is wavy: neither a mass of curls nor straight hanks of fish-line, but living Indian floss that catches the light in changing moods, dissolves it in full-gold shadows, then sends it forth in the lustre of moonbeams. She glances toward the cookhouse; her Mongolian eyes—of a nomad maiden—flash a greeting to Javan, he being Toa's employer. Her pretty lips—so perfect for the kissing she knows nothing of, innocent dear!—smile and then abruptly she lowers her head and draws in her lips, while her olive-brown cheeks turn a darker shade. For she has blushed, bless

her! as redly as a Polynesian maiden can. Javan knows she has remembered the disgraceful fight, so he, too, lowers his head, and for a second time that morning he sighs.

When the last of the worshippers had entered the church Javan crossed the yard to the trading station with the foggy notion that possibly he might clear up a part of the litter of schooner week, even open a few cases of dress goods to find if the head office had sent him anything better than the usual shoddy remnants. But one glance in the trading station was enough to dishearten him. To his left was a broken gin bottle, a dozen ladies' back combs, three gross of safety matches, and quantities of packing material in a tangled rat's nest. To his right was a bundle of newspapers on which, apparently, fifty village toddlers had exhausted their destructive impulse by tearing, wadding, and masticating it into its erstwhile form of paper pulp. Directly in front of him was the counter mat, stained with brew on one end, with ink on the other, and covered with divers valuable trade articles, such as melting lollipops, fire-crackers, tangled brass wire, rusty fishhooks. Moreover, placed here and there without any feeling for symmetry were at least forty packing-cases, strapped with iron, wired, nailed as only a head office can nail, grinning at him malevolently, verily shrieking "Come and open us if you can!"

Javan decided that he couldn't. A glance over his shoulder showed him that scores of toddlers had sneaked out of church to crowd on the back porch, their eyes eloquently expressive of lollipops. All bosom friends of Javan (who is fond of toddlers, ages one to five), through some subtle instinct unknown to the civilised child, had sensed that the trading station was open, and now had swarmed on the porch like a vandal horde. Javan shook his head sadly. The lollipops were in the bottom of a vile case that had been doubly strapped, wired and nailed. Promising the toddlers lollipops at a future date, he broke

out two of the few remaining bottles of the Special No. IV, and returned to the balcony.

During the rest of the morning he glanced through the newspapers his friends had sent him, and he found, as often before, that nothing of importance had happened in the world during the past six months. There had been a war in Africa, but it had begun and ended between the last two schooner arrivals, so already it was history; numerous movie stars had been granted divorce on the grounds of mental cruelty; sixty-eight new classics of English literature had been published; a score of frustrated idealists had killed themselves, et cetera, et cetera, all ancient history, as Javan himself said as he pitched the papers over the balcony railing so Mama could pick them up and use them to kindle the fire.

With each schooner it was the same story. He would ask: "Well, Captain, any news?" and invariably the captain would reply: "Not a thing." And when he opened his papers—if he did open them—he would find that the captain had been right: not a thing had happened.

Men living in the outposts of the world develop an objective outlook on current events. Not being able to follow daily the development of world crises, these crises lose their emotional value. To illustrate, a man living in London learns that the King of England is ill, that he is worse, that his condition is critical, that he is dead, and the new king has ascended the throne. Day by day the man builds up an awareness of the stream of events. He may look forward to its conclusion with morbid pleasure; he may dread it; he may ponder its consequences. When the news comes that the old king is dead, the new one has ascended the throne, he is able to shout with feeling keyed up by anticipation: "The King is dead! Long live the King!" But to the man in the outpost there comes only one item of historical interest—namely, six months ago the King of England died, and he was succeeded by the Prince of Wales. It is a thing of the past. Reviewing the illness,

the death, the ascension of the new king is literally no more than reviewing the parallel events in the time of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great. Interesting news must contain the time element of a unified present and near past combined with implied or stated consequences on the near future—otherwise it is history.

Mr. Moonlight claims that a man living without news from the outside world becomes in *time* what a cosmopolitan is in *space*. The Age of Pericles becomes to him as much a thing of the present as is the Age of Machines to another person. To Javan's type of mind this is a felicitous condition. He believes that when one follows daily the news, one loses one's sense of values: the latest divorce scandal becomes more important than, let us say, Pareto's *The Mind and Society*, while, in fact, the former is scandalous gossip, the latter a masterpiece of scientific thinking.

One year, when the schooner was at Danger Island and Javan was dining aboard, one of the passengers spoke of a certain Mrs. Simpson. "Who is Mrs. Simpson?" Javan asked. "My goodness!" the passenger exclaimed. "Haven't you heard of Mrs. Simpson? You are as ignorant as the Danger Islanders. You should keep in touch with world events." "Yes, that's right," Javan replied politely. "Please pass the beans." But for the life of him he could not feel that he had missed anything of genuine importance through not having heard of Mrs. Simpson. He knew all about Aspasia, Madame de Pompadour, Delilah, and Thaïs; moreover, during the preceding six months he had found in Pareto's four volumes more mirth, pathos, scandal, horror, and extremely valuable information than he could have gleaned by following daily the events of the world—including the affair of Mrs. Simpson. And when he had felt the need for scandalous gossip he had had but to listen to the news of Danger Island, as reported by that cadmium-yellow journalist, Mama.

Aware that one follows the news only to satisfy a morbid craving for scandalmongering, Mr. Moonlight believes that

it makes no difference whatsoever whether he follows the news of Danger Island or of the world.

Javan heard the church bell ring for the eleven o'clock service; then, with the village very still, with even the roosters and the toddlers hushed in reverent anticipation of Sea Foam's noon service, he fell asleep.

Mama woke him at four o'clock to serve his second and last meal: a roast fowl and a few potatoes. She stopped long enough to say hurriedly that there had been a splendid noon service. Miss Red-Jones, she explained, smiling wistfully, had worn Toa's bandana handkerchief around her neck to show that she had forgiven Toa her fight with Miss Tern; also, Sea Foam had pretended not to notice the handkerchief, though Deacon Bribery (his half-brother) had pointed it out to him. During the service everybody had stared at the handkerchief and whispered how nice it was that Miss Red-Jones had forgiven Toa, and that no doubt they would meet to-night, somewhere where Miss Tern could not find them. Then, after church, The Name had told Sea Foam that Miss Red-Jones had stolen his son's bandana handkerchief, and that he would report it to Constable Benny. So, all in all, Mama concluded, as she hobbled down the balcony steps, it was an exceptionally fine service.

V

Javan Moonlight Reads Himself to Sleep

The sky was overcast that Sunday evening; the south-east trade had resolved into gusts of wind and rain followed by moments of calm when the air seemed tingling with life. Mr. Moonlight loves these intervals in the monotony of the trade wind. After each squall the air is crisp and chill; the thunder of combers on the outer reef reverberates in long cannonades. The island is revivified: old men rise from their mats; toddlers rush pell-mell through the puddles, kicking, splashing, even wallowing; the roosters raise their voices in strident masculine protest. "Perhaps I shall go to work to-day," King-of-the-Sky bellows, and, "Good day for fishing," Bones mutters, without leaving his place in the doorway. And when a squall is yelling in the coconut trees Mr. Moonlight may leave his mat to stalk singing along the lagoon beach, gesturing a little, his head thrown back, glorying in the cold rain spattering on his face, feeling the wild swaying of the palms in keeping with his own aroused spirit.

Javan spends many of his evenings on the balcony of the trading station. Lying there, at the hour of sunset, he can see the panorama of atoll life moving drowsily beneath him. It is true that most of the village is obscured by the building itself, but there are many huts scattered along the beach; and it is here that the fishermen paddle in from the lagoon, the children splash about the shallow water, old women sit in the shade and breeze to plait their pandanus leaf hats, to gossip and doze, and the wild youths of the three villages meet to wrestle, play marbles, make intricate string figures, or discuss the latest love-affair.

On some evenings the canoes of Leeward Village come

from Frigate Bird Islet. Javan can see them from afar, their sails bellying to the wind, twenty or thirty of them moving so rapidly that it seems no more than a moment before the spray from their bows is visible; then they have dodged among the coral heads of the crescent-shaped bay and beached in full view of the trading station. They are loaded high above the washboards with hernandia leaves—green manure for the taro beds; and there are baskets full of ripe coconuts, bunches of drinking nuts, a hundred or more young boobies tied by their feet like bunches of onions, squawking raucously.

Soon the leaves and nuts are stacked in the outhouses, and now the men help, turn and turn about, carrying the canoes to the shoring logs. They bail them out, dry them with masses of coconut fibre, and pile plaited fronds on top of them.

The men stroll back to their houses. The sun has set, and the tropic night is deepening by almost perceptible degrees; in a half-hour it will be dark. A flash of light falls from the sky as a cloud, still aglow with the sun, passes over the lagoon to reflect its radiance on the rippling water. But in a moment it has gone; the coral heads have vanished; the distant reef has dissolved in the sea. A cricket sounds his strident love-call from under the balcony; a rooster crows from his perch in the hernandia tree. It is evening, the hour of reverie and of melancholy.

Newly-married Mrs. Wail-of-Woe leaves her house to walk to the beach, followed by her younger sister. Both are quite naked. A few moments later the sandy stretch between the village and the lagoon is dotted with the figures of Javan's neighbours, all nude, old and young alike, moving to the lagoon for their evening bath. Men and women intermingle, naked urchins jump whooping this way and that, The Bird puts his arm around Miss Tern's waist and they run to the lagoon to plunge in. No one is self-conscious, for they have done this since they were babies, and to them there is no mystery about sexual

characteristics, no consciousness of exposure. Visually their sexes interest them no more than the sexes of animals; psychically it is otherwise, for they are an ardent race.

And of late years Javan, though still a young man, has become indifferent to nakedness, though at first it was disturbing. But still he has not attained the healthy incuriousness of his neighbours, for when pretty Miss Red-Jones trips gracefully down the beach, physically desirable, knowing herself to be so, but not aware that in one man her nakedness is the stimulating factor, Javan is not nearly enough of a Saint Anthony to gaze at her unmoved.

At such times he is annoyed with himself for not being able to show the impassivity of his neighbours. One evening, about a month before Miss Red-Jones had been made into a woman, this consciousness of sex was particularly disturbing. He had opened the station and was touching a match to the hurricane lantern when Miss Red-Jones came running in, dripping wet and unclothed, her hair clinging to her tawny skin.

"Sea Foam wants some perfume quickly, for baby is sick!" she cried, out of breath, her panting agitating her breasts.

When Javan had handed her a bottle of the favourite Danger Island medicine, she clutched it and ran out of the station, unaware that she had left Javan both shaken and aggravated with himself. Why could he not look on a live nude figure in the same way the natives do? The answer was easily found: it was because he had been brought up to consider sexual love both shameful and desirable—a vice to be indulged in clandestinely.

Night has come before the people leave the lagoon, for they are playful, and the old grandpapas and grandmammas enjoy as much as the younger people splashing and ducking, turning somersaults, and making walrus noises, their instinct to play having been no more inhibited than their instinct to love. When at last they return to their homes the older people clothe themselves in pareus,

dungaree trousers, or grass skirts; but the young fry seldom bother about such unessentials. Then tiny coconut-shell fires flash through the villages, revealing groups of squatting natives cooking their evening meal—revealing the big white church, the chipped-coral houses of the Village Fathers, the wattle-and-thatch huts half-lost in the shadows, the canopy of fronds where metallic-green leaves open channels for the starlight, rustle under the steady southeast trade.

The fires subside; the houses dissolve among the soft and moving shadows; the old folks and the married attend their own affairs, leaving the young unmarried to slip unhindered through the gloom of the coconut groves to the moon-gleaming outer beach, in the eternal quest of love.

On this Sunday night Javan dragged his mat into the house, lighted the lamp, placed it on the table, then lay back to let his thoughts wander hither and thither or dribble away in happy vacuity.

He was too drowsy to read and not drowsy enough to sleep. A draught of air, perceptible only by its smell of damp leaves, flowed through the open doorway; a hen clucked sleepily from her perch on the cook-house roof; the rumble of combers rose and fell in long crescendos: otherwise Danger Island was wrapped in enchanted stillness.

In the room there was a little to distract his attention. On the wall at his head, two framed portraits, one of his Uncle Urban, the other of his Aunt Adelina. At his left, a deal-pine table, a camphor-wood chest, and a steamer chair. At his right, above the closed, front balcony doorway, a charcoal drawing by William Hesthall of San Francisco. A genuine work of art, Javan invariably points it out to his rare visitor as an example of the only function ugliness can fulfil in art—namely, to contrast beauty. The drawing portrays dead houses of awful symmetry, a sign "EAT," another "BUY," another "SELL," and another "DANCE." The windows of the houses are closed; the sky lowers down like a coffin lid; but in the foreground, tiny,

dejected, frustrated, his head lowered, his clothes hanging limply to his body, walks a solitary figure, a violin-case in his hand. When Javan feels discontented with atoll life he studies this drawing, and perhaps he substantiates its lesson with a few pages from one of the "proletarian authors." The effect is nauseating but salutary.

His bookshelves cover the gable-end wall at his feet, and to-night as he stared at them he realised what they meant to him. For in the realm of the intellect Javan Moonlight is alone on Danger Island: the villagers associate with him only in the realm of the spirit. When a schooner comes to take away his copra and bring him a supply of trade goods a strange face will sometimes appear, and then there is always the same question:

"But aren't you lonely here without another white man on the island?"

"No," Javan may reply, "for I have——" and then, perhaps, he will break off, realising that this shade from the other world would not understand if he explained that he has long discussions with his books.

He does not read as much as formerly, for his books have been thumbed many times, and he dreads labouring through scores of new volumes to find, once in a great while, a congenial companion. Nowadays he derives greater pleasure from lying on his Manihiki mat, resting his eyes on a cherished volume, and reviewing it mentally.

There is Mungo Park, for instance. To-night the little green *Journal* literally jumped from its place between *The Caves and Jungles of Hindustan* and Calderon's *Tahiti,* and, opening before him, Mungo Park himself stepped out.

"Ah, Mungo, old friend," Javan muttered, "you and Charles Dougherty are what all great travel writers should be; but you have a grave fault, Mungo, a grave fault: you make other books on the travel shelf fade by comparison into insignificance."

The familiar objects in Javan's room receded and dis-

solved into the chipped-coral walls. There, where the table had been, Javan now saw Mungo Park standing by a deep brook, tossing pebbles in the water to ascertain its depth, while a rotund little man called Walter Scott appeared, peeping from behind a copse of brush. Park muttered . . . but no! he did not speak: he invoked spirits from their graves and projected them in living pictures. All at once Javan's blood raced through his veins, for he could see Ali's men galloping toward him, clouds of sand rising above the horizon, a half-starved white man prisoned with a pig in a hovel, voluptuous houris with swaying hips . . . and then this same white man wandering on and on in a friendless wilderness, until at last he was alone in the heart of darkest Africa, hungry, naked, but indomitable. Then Mungo Park turned to Javan, his eyes gentle but contorted with pain, and he said:

"After they had gone"—and Javan knew he had meant the robbers—"I sat for some time looking around me with amazement and terror. Whichever way I turned, nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone; surrounded by savage animals and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. All these circumstances crowded at once upon my recollection, and I confess that my spirits began to fail me. I considered my fate as certain, and that I had no alternative but to lie down and perish. The influence of religion, however, aided and supported me. I reflected that no human prudence or foresight could possibly have averted my present sufferings. I was indeed a stranger in a strange land, yet I was still under the protecting eye of that Providence who has condescended to call Himself the stranger's friend. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss, in fructification, irresistibly caught my eye . . . . Can that being who planted, watered and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which

appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the sufferings of a creature formed after his own image?—surely not!"

"I can see you, Mungo Park," Javan muttered, his arms moving in slow gestures, "deep in the intricacies of a maze that daily becomes more and more involved, knowing the improbability of ever breaking out, yet pushing forward until you seem lost indeed. Darkest Africa! The phrase is a fitting one, for, as you plod on, the folds of wilderness close behind you, impenetrable curtains drop, one by one, seeming to blot out even the sun; an infinite night descends: you are alone and friendless in a land where it is a virtue to kill you.

"But after you have escaped from Ali's camp, my vicarious terror lessens. I feel that now it is too late to turn back; you may as well go on, for death awaits you in either case. It now needs a jinni from the *Arabian Nights,* who can cleave mountains, dish up a meal or a harem in the twinkling of an eye, to take you back to Doctor Laidley."

Suddenly there came a deep-mouthed bellow from the book-shelves, and the spirit, Guardian of the Forest, leaped from *The Tale of the Sea Rose and the Girl of China* to land heavily, with a horrible grimace, on a corner of the mat; and then another scene moved before Javan's eyes. Prince Nurigham dismounted in the depths of a forest to sit by the mountainous jinni. He took a cake of flour and melted butter from his food-sack and offered it to the jinni, who swallowed it with one gulp, and then, jumping in the air in a transport of ecstasy, cried so loudly that his voice seemed to make the framed portraits of Aunt Adelina and Uncle Urban rattle against the wall—

"This human food gives me more pleasure than an inheritance of that red sulphur which formed the stone in Sulayman's ring! By Allah! I am so delighted that, if each of my hairs turned to a hundred thousand tongues and each of those tongues were to sing your praises, the

whole concert would fall short of the gratitude I feel. If you do not ask for some favour in return, my heart will be as a porcelain plate dropped from a high terrace!"

"Will you take Mungo Park out of darkest Africa?" Javan asked . . . but in reply came only a guffaw from the balcony doorway. Turning his head, he saw William grinning and making interrogative movements with his eyes and lips. They were easily interpreted, but Javan was not ready to grant the old man's request.

"I am working, William," he said, annoyed that the magic of the book-shelves had been broken. "A wise man once said that it is impossible for an author to teach his wife that he is working when he is looking out the window, and this, William, unhappily applies to traders lying on their mats and disturbed by heathen retainers. . . . Yes; you and Constable Benny may have *one* bottle of the Guest brew, but only *one*. . . . Turn the lamp low, William, and leave me. And do not raise your voices above a whisper while you are drinking, for it is very silent in darkest Africa, in the forest of the Jinn."

William seemed puzzled over Javan's last words. He turned the lamp low, sighed, shrugged his shoulders, and moved down the steps to the store-room, growling: "These damn-fool white men! What does he mean by darkest Africa, and the forest of the gin? . . . Has Javan any gin, Benny?"

"No," Javan's ex-store-boy, the constable, replied; "Supercargo Bates drank the last bottle. I know because I counted them."

"You would!" Javan muttered as desultory reminiscences passed through his mind . . . a religious school . . . mortification of the flesh . . . intense longing for freedom and adventure . . . measles . . . his brother . . . *Bhanavar the Beautiful,* and temporary relief from the barbarities of a religion of suppression. His eyes moved along the book-shelves to a little red volume beside *The Light of Asia,* and he mused:

"George Meredith! Is it possible that you wrote *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*—and also *The Shaving of Shagpat!*" And then, not waiting for Meredith's reply: "In my boyhood I was cloistered in a strait-laced academy where the students were taught the tenets of a pseudo-religion. We were told that Grimm's fairies, Santa Claus, and orthodox ghosts did not exist. No literature on such subjects was allowed in school; but the fairies of Madame Blavatsky, the Mahatmas of the Himalayas, the elementals and astral shades of William Quan Judge formed a basic part of our education. *The Shaving of Shagpat* was on the school book-shelf because the masters considered that the author of *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* could not be imaginative and beautiful enough to hurt our minds. When I had measles my brother read this book to me, picking it from the shelf at random, and since then I have loved you, George Meredith, in spite of the rest of your work—though I admit that I cannot read a page of even your *Shagpat* to-day. I have sprinkled a few drops of the essential oil of opoponax in the binding of your book, to give it a heavy oriental fragrance in harmony with the story itself. It is now cherished among the other supreme books of my library. They are George Borrow's *Lavengro,* Villon's *Testaments,* Mungo Park's *Journal,* Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps perdu, The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night,* Plutarch's *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans,* and Doughty's *Arabia Deserta.*"

George Meredith had disappeared; the other characters seemed to be rocking to and fro, slowly, like old people, in the shadowy corners of the room; and now Javan heard the distant sound of a hammer beating iron, the hoarse gasp of a bellows, galloping hoof-beats, the horn of a stage-coach sounding loudly in the crisp night air; and then, suddenly, George Borrow stood before him, white-haired, upright, and proud in his tinker's apron.

"You can give an author no better excuse for jumping

from the book-shelf," he said, "than by telling him you like his book."

As had happened often before, a few words from Borrow charmed away the Danger Island trading station—charmed away the pictures, the lamp, the table, the chair, even the book-shelves; but in their place now moved a motley crowd of gypsies and Andalusian orange vendors, Armenian financiers and surgeons with a mania for horse trading, Irish card-sharps and battling landlords, flaming tinmen, snake-charmers, and men in panic fear of they knew not what.

"Ah, George Borrow," Javan sighed. "You had but to touch the commonplace to make it picturesque, breathe on the sordid to make it beautiful! What unfading pictures you gave us in *Lavengro, Romany Rye, The Bible in Spain,* and even *Romano Lavo-Lil*—and what a meddling old Englishman you turned out to be!"

"I—a meddling old Englishman?"

"Even so. It is as hard to believe that Meredith wrote both *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* and *The Shaving of Shagpat* as that you wrote the books I have named—and also *Wild Wales.* Can it be that Mr. Petulengro's friend, the tinker of the dingle, the acquaintance of the man who could read the *Crockery Literature of China,* but could not tell 'what's o'clock,' the gypsy, the scholar, the priest, is the same inquisitive old gentleman who lugged a wife and daughter through Wales, never tiring of relating how he astonished the natives with his knowledge of Welsh?"

Apparently George Borrow did not hear Javan. The motley company had disappeared, while Borrow seemed to be sitting some distance away, in an old English inn, with a jug of brown ale at his elbow and a fear-stricken landlord hovering in the background. Now and again he sipped the ale with great relish, expounding betimes on its virtue. Staring at his strong, muscular figure, Javan realised that the Flaming Tinman must have been a strong fellow to

stand up to him; but then, even as Javan watched, he grew dim, receded, vanished through the doorway, and an instant later William's hoary head appeared with eyes round, lips suggestive of a sardonic smile. Javan nodded assent, whereupon the retainer vanished as suddenly as had the friend of gypsies; then there was the pop of a cork pulled from another bottle of the Guest brew, and William's voice, whispering to Benny:

"The boss is a trifle mad again to-night; we'd better leave him alone. He is talking to himself and gesticulating wildly, like Parson Sea Foam when he tells those lies about Jonah."

Their whispering was drowned in the uproar of a squall screaming through the jet-black night and lashing the coconut fronds. "Blow down the trees!" it seemed to shriek. "Tear down the houses! What do we care for Danger Island? Blow this scrap of land into sea!" And suddenly, with a little flurry of rain, it was gone. The strange harmonies of the himene singers came as clear as bell notes through the still air; the distant reef grumbled like some gigantic animal, full fed, quiet now, but ready when the time is ripe to sweep the island away. From below the balcony Javan heard the crunching of bare feet on gravel, whispering voices:

"Is Javan awake?"

"We do not know. William was up to see him a little while ago. He seemed to have a fever or something. You'd better not bother him."

"He is terrible when one wakes him."

"Let us wait. If he is awake he will hear us and come down."

"He must be told to open the trading station to-morrow."

"Positively!"

"Javan is a bad man; he does as he pleases."

"He has no heart."

"All the old men are hungry for tobacco."

"Sure t'ing; and he lies on his mat, drinking beer and talking to himself. Hell! Damn! Go ta Hell!"

A confused babble of assents; then silence.

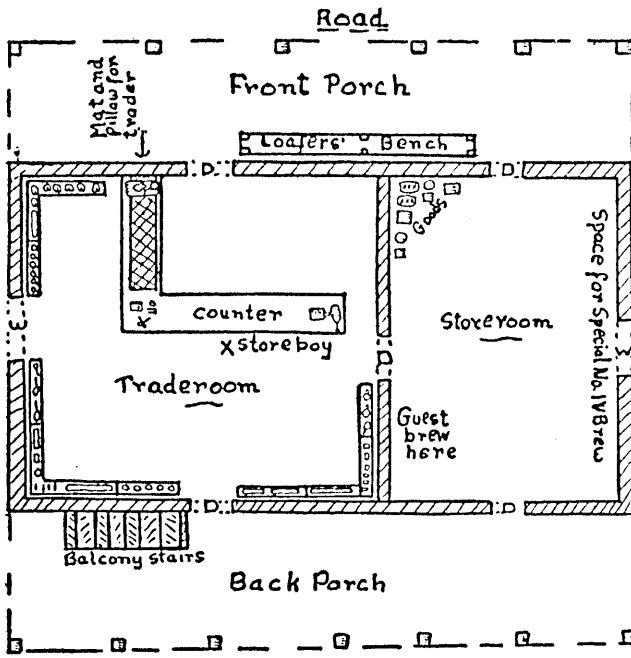
The Village Fathers, gathered below the balcony, hear, above the distant mutter of the reef, above the soft clatter of coconut fronds and the voices of the himene singers, a snore. Slowly they walk away. Javan can hear the crunch of gravel under their feet. He blows out the light. A last raucous guffaw comes from William as he closes the storeroom door and locks it. Silence, peace: Mr. Moonlight is asleep.

VI

Toa the Impulsive Store-Boy

Javan Moonlight is one of those men who crave dangerous adventures—those men who find their full spiritual life in scaling mountain crags, navigating stormy seas, fighting in the thick of battle. Often, daily, hourly, while perforce he is obliged to lie on his Manihiki mat, he dreams of the life of action, and, the blood coursing through his veins, he cries to Toa to open the trading station, to Mama to fry the eggs and make it snappy, to William to shake his old legs and bring the brew. But Toa, his store-boy, is of the dependent type—the kind of youth with whom women fall in love. He is so irresponsible, so seemingly helpless, that he wakens their instinct to protect. Also, he is impulsive, which makes it necessary to keep an eye on him in the trading station.

It is impossible to foretell what the exceedingly good-looking lad will do. One moment he is all enthusiasm, straightening up the station. He leaps to a bolt of striped shirting, flings it on the counter, starts unrolling it preparatory to re-rolling it in straighter alignment, when, abruptly, his eyes catching sight of the fish-hooks, which are always in a state of confusion, he will dash over to them and scatter them from one end of the station to the other, only stopping long enough to empty the cartons of ladies' back combs. Then, instead of returning to the fish-hooks, let alone the striped shirting, he will leave both them and the combs strewn here and there and everywhere while he dashes out to the cook-house to help William chop wood. Ten minutes of Toa's straightening up leaves the station in such disorder that it is quite futile even to think of putting things right.



LINE ISLANDS TRADING COMPANY'S STATION ON DANGER ISLAND

It is even worse when business is brisk. Not for a moment can Mr. Moonlight leave his place on the lower L of the counter, where he spreads his mat when his presence is required in the station. He has to keep his eyes glued on Toa, for when Deacon Bribery comes in for a stick of tobacco Toa will jump to the case of twist with a cheery, "Yes, sir, Deacon!" toss the tobacco to the old nuisance, and then, just at the critical second, turn his attention to some female customer before collecting the fourpence for the twist. Javan has tried, through divers subtle methods, to extend Toa's period of concentration to a point where he will take the shilling or florin in payment; then, at the instant before change should be given, turn his attention

to another customer, but as yet Javan has only partially succeeded. However, this is only one of the problems that harass his life in the Danger Island station.

One thing about Toa is that he never makes enemies. Every last soul on the island likes him, and not a one of them takes him seriously—unless it is Miss Red-Jones or Miss Tern. When he addresses the Village Fathers—as he does whenever they meet, for his impulsiveness is not dampened by their dignity—they listen to him, with grins and shrugs, and, oftener than not, send him home in tears. Only the other night—as Mama has mentioned—he jumped to his feet during a discussion about dividing the community-owned land. "The land must not be divided!" he cried. Then, as everybody started laughing: "Listen to me, Village Fathers! Have not I been made into a man? Am not I one of the traders of Danger Island? If we divide the land the children of a large family will be paupers! We must think of our children!" Then, coming to Toa like the hisses of an audience to an amateur on his first night, the loud guffaws of the Village Fathers; and that despicable Deacon Bribery: "Where are your children, fledgling? Wait till you are man enough to make a child with that girl of yours; then you can talk to the Fathers!" And Bones: "Listen to Toa! Toa-the-man! He is like the young coconuts that are full grown, that have much sweet water in them but no meat!" and, "Aye, aye," from loud-mouthed King-of-the-Sky. "The same coconuts that make such a big noise when they fall!" At that everybody roared with laughter, while Toa broke into tears.

As dear old Mama says: "Toa is so good-looking he just can't help speaking to the Village Fathers."

Toa has other tribulations, and his father's stinginess is not the least of them. Through some hook or crook The Name gets most of Toa's wages as store-boy, and, though it is illegal, his share of the community copra money. Toa could demand and receive this money, and he would do so if he had Javan's business acumen. Poor boy!

He hasn't a fish-line or a bag of marbles, a "pipe" knife or a sling-shot. He would be in rags if Javan did not give him his old clothes; and, worst of all, he is in a continual state of nerves because he cannot buy Miss Red-Jones a blue silk parasol like the one Mama has.

Still, with all his troubles, one would never know he had a worry in the world to see him in the trading station, bright-faced, cheerful, dashing this way and that, unpacking cases of remnants from the head store, clearing away the litter of schooner week—the empty tobacco tins, the gin bottles, the brew bottles, the masticated newspapers; or to see him brushing off the counter before spreading Javan's new mat, or smiling indulgently when Javan demands that he unpack one case and arrange its contents on the shelves before opening another case.

The Monday morning following the schooner's departure, Javan Moonlight and Toa must have worked three or four hours without a rest. First there was the usual shoddy trade goods to unpack—and what shoddy goods they were! Javan is probably correct when he states that every trade article which cannot be sold in the head store is sent to the large branch stores, where a few yards or a few pounds, as the case may be, are disposed of. Then the same trash, badly shop-worn by now, is sent to the trading stations at Penrhyn, Manihiki, and Rakahanga, and after lying there a year or so the miserable remnants are dumped in the Danger Island branch station. The prints are perished, and discoloured on the edges of the bolts where for years the light has been bleaching them; the knives are rusty; the mouth-organs are good for not over six notes; the firecrackers often make no more than a sputtering noise; the rayon silk is a labyrinth where little silver-fish wiggle in and out, their bodies tinged with the dye of the textile they have been devouring.

After the shoddy goods are unpacked there is no rest. At least half must be repacked and hidden from the customers; for one of the secrets of trading is in keeping

the people in a state of titillation by periodic displays of new lines of goods. For the same reason that a successful dictator must by spectacular exploits divert the attention of his subjects from the shoddiness of his government, so also must a crack trader produce fresh goods at the correct psychological moments to divert the attention of his customers from the quality of the goods themselves.

So this morning Javan repacked more than half the goods in the tightest cases, and sprinkled them thoroughly with naphthalene so as to discourage the cockroaches and silver-fish. These goods might be kept until the Christmas holidays, or until after a copra-making on the uninhabited islets.

Now (Javan claims), in an academic way the customers know about this trading technique; but if the full packing-cases were placed in the trade-room where the people could see them, and by a simple process of deductive reasoning surmise their contents, then to the academic awareness of hidden goods would be added an emotional awareness. They would, with the visual image of the cases before them, wonder what the cases contained; their imaginations would be stimulated. They would speculate on whether or not the hidden goods were better than the exposed goods; they would decide that they were; they would refuse to buy the exposed goods, and would hold back their money until Javan had unpacked the cases. All this shows that one must be subtle and inventive to trade successfully in these atolls, and, possessing these qualities to a high degree, Javan hence places the packed cases in the store-room and modestly curtains them off with a number of cases of the Special No. IV.

Throughout the morning Toa was a great nuisance. Javan could not keep the lad's mind on his work for more than a few moments at a time. More than once he was literally obliged to get up from his mat and do some part of the work himself. For instance, while Toa was re-rolling a bolt of misnamed voile so as to conceal the bleached

stripes, his hand faltered, an abstracted look came in his eyes, and, "Her hair!" he stammered.

(Do not imagine that these islanders are incapable of poetic expression. If you had lived with them as long as Javan has you would know that they react as romantically as does the American youth in the subway with his girl friend.)

"Her hair!" he exclaimed, referring of course to the parson's daughter.

"Yes, Toa," Javan growled: "Vandyke brown, like English breakfast tea without milk, very charming. . . . Now continue unrolling the bolt of voile."

But after a few impulsive rolls his hand again faltered, and this time it was "Her eyes!" and later "Her lips! . . . Her chin! . . . Her neck!" isolating various of the not unique physical characteristics of Miss Red-Jones, as do the story-tellers in the *Arabian Nights* when describing the beauties of their own houris. And like these story-tellers Toa did not know where to stop; but Javan broke in with a verbal red pencil of protest in time to save the modest tone of the trading station.

Later, while Toa was busy arranging the Dolly Dyes in neat little pyramids, he messed up the colour scheme when telling Javan that Miss Red-Jones could work in the trading station. "I know Sea Foam wants her to come here," he said. "I don't care—it will keep Bones away."

"Why are you jealous of Bones?" Javan asked. "You are not jealous of the young unmarried."

By this time Toa had forgotten about the Dolly Dyes. "There is something dangerous about Bones," he said in a note of fear. "I won't care when she starts going with the other boys . . . but there's something about Bones . . ."

"Perhaps Miss Red-Jones feels the same way about Miss Tern."

"I hate Miss Tern!" Toa cried suddenly.

"And yet you make love to her."

"Yes; but I don't want to, ever again." Then, after a

little hesitation, "With Miss Tern it's different than it is with Miss Red-Jones."

"Aye, Toa; and if Bones ever makes love to Miss Red-Jones it will be different, too. . . . Now open that case of Japanese matches!" Javan shouted, frightened by the look that had come into his store-boy's eyes. "Hurry up! We can't sit here all day talking about these females! Lord, man!"—and he continued in this strain for some time, until Toa was too busy to be either romantic or jealous.

VII

Business as Usual

When Javan Moonlight started work for his present firm he received his instructions from the manager of the head office, and these instructions amounted to precisely two things: (1) He was not to anticipate his salary. This, of course, was to discourage him from transferring the bulk of the stock to his personal account, deducting the usual twenty per cent a trader is entitled to, then selling the goods as a private investment and pocketing the twenty per cent profit. It is the system by which many a trader, of less integrity than Mr. Moonlight, has made his fortune. (2) He was not to give credit to natives, which meant that there would be a growl if he collected too many bad debts. A final instruction came from the supercargo—namely: the current price for copra and mother-of-pearl shell.

But one would be badly mistaken in fancying that this is all there is to trading. For instance, the new trader in the South Seas invariably falls into the error of trying to do business. He seems obsessed with the importance of selling goods and buying copra. No mistake could be more fatal. When the trader tries to break down the sales resistance of the customer he succeeds only in engendering suspicion in said customer's mind. The trader must have some ulterior motive, the native concludes, else why this anxiety to sell. Perhaps the goods are of inferior quality, or the trader is unconscionably trying to make a profit. The customer becomes coy, fidgety, even alarmed: he dashes out of the station to bury his money in the back yard.

And when the trader visits the headmen of a village to request them to weigh their copra, promises a certain price for it, pleads that much copra be made, the headmen

ask themselves why this trader is so anxious to buy. Has the price risen in that mythical land where copra is used for some absurd purpose? Has some other company decided to send a ship to the island and pay a fabulous price for the stuff? Or is it simply that a process has been discovered whereby copra is transmuted to gold? No; they will hold their copra: this young trader is too anxious to buy.

On the other hand, old and experienced traders like Javan—they who are termed "crack" in the islands, though this is no reflection on their heads—avoid business like the plague. Do the villagers want to buy the ten bolts of Victoria lawn? Well, why don't they come at a reasonable time—to-morrow or the next day, in the evening? Is the price on that turkey-red print exorbitant? Why buy it, then? Anyway, Leeward Village wants it, so one has no right to sell. Wait till the ship comes back next year, and maybe there will be some better goods aboard. With that the trader carefully packs the print in one of the empty cases, and starts sprinkling it with naphthalene to demonstrate how precious it is . . . and when he turns to break out another bottle of the Special No. IV more than likely the Village Fathers will beg him to let them have the print and not to sell it to Leeward Village.

There is much more to trading than weighing in copra and then exchanging goods for the money one has paid out. The trader must never forget, if he wants to become an expert, that these island people have no use for his goods. They got along for centuries on the things their atolls produced, and they can return to the old way of living without pain or regret. They will buy a fish-line or a package of firecrackers, biscuits or marbles, trousers or lace, patent medicine or perfume; but they are aware that they need no one of these things. They make better fish-line than they can buy, and biscuits are a poor food in comparison to taro. Of course, firecrackers and marbles are another matter, approximating importance to such a degree that their entire disappearance might be regretted.

Trousers are only things one wears when attending divine services—a part of the ritual of religion, apparently; and lace looks well on young ladies, but the mosquitoes bite through it. Patent medicine is inferior to Witch Doctor Pau's prescriptions; and finally, if Miss Red-Jones buys a bottle of perfume, more than likely she will pour all of it over her at one time, then go love-making on the outer beach. She will be the sensation of the night; but even she knows that this can happen only a few times in one's life—a thrilling experience which one does not repeat often.

So when Javan opened the trading station that afternoon, and the neighbours crowded in to examine noisily the goods, he did not exhibit any indecent haste in attempting to make a sale; in fact, he did not leave his place on the counter.

"Look the gear over, neighbours," he said, "but hurry up about it, for Mama has my dinner waiting. . . . No; there's no good print—only the same old remnants the Company can't sell elsewhere. . . . Yes, Bones; there are some mouth-organs, and if you buy two of them, at the high price of one shilling and sixpence each, you may be able to get most of the notes of one octave out of them. . . . Toa, there's Miss Red-Jones's pretty little sister, Miss Tears! What beautiful golden hair she has! Isn't she lovely! . . . When are they going to make you into a woman, Miss Tears? Soon, you hope! Ah, youth, youth! Give her a lollipop, Toa! Business is terrible!"

And later, as still he lay back on the counter: "Ah, Mrs. Sea Foam, I see you are right on your daughter's heels. But you can trust Miss Tears in my trading establishment, for I keep my store-boy well in hand. . . . Now, I have been thinking about your children. . . . Toa, show Mrs. Sea Foam that package of play suits. . . . Your many children must be clothed, Mrs. Sea Foam. The Reverend Johns spoke about nakedness when he came last time, and so it is your duty, being the parson's wife, to set a good example by properly clothing *all* your children in this

special line of play suits. It is considered (by the Reverend Johns) shocking to see naked the offspring of the parson's wife."

(In this case Javan was using coercion to break down Mrs. Sea Foam's sales resistance. The case, however, was exceptional. Probably he found ironic satisfaction in using pulsive influence against the parson's wife, both because Sea Foam is his landlord and because he is the agent of missionary coercion on Danger Island.)

"I have here, in this package that Toa is now opening, one dozen play-suits," Javan went on. "They were made specially for me in London. I propose to sell them to you at the absurdly low price of ten shillings the suit. There are no others in the station—just the one dozen—so your children alone among all the village youngsters will be dressed in precisely the same kind of clothes the London children wear—all the little toddlers of the dukes and lords and things!"

Mrs. Sea Foam's eyes opened when she saw the blue calico suits. "But Sea Foam," she said diffidently, "he will be terribly angry; he will never pay for them."

"Woman," Javan cried, "rest your mind. The fair sex need not worry about these depressing, sordid, money matters. It is for you simply to take the suits home and clothe your children, as the Reverend Johns demands; it is for me to lie awake nights worrying about how I shall collect. Take them, woman: I am responsible for the payment."

"But the buttonholes," she murmured, after a more careful inspection of the suits.

This complaint came as an unexpected counter-attack. Javan nearly lost the sale while determining the best way to repulse it. The buttonholes, as usual on goods made in America and England, were all vertical instead of horizontal. The primitive neolithic people of the South Seas knew, ages ago (according to Javan), that buttonholes should be made so that their length is on a line with the

tension from the button. A buttonhole on a shirt-front should always be horizontal, never vertical. Fancy what would happen if the pants manufacturers made buttonholes vertical! The zipper people would take the hint and run the button-hole manufacturers out of business!

Mrs. Sea Foam detected right away that the buttonholes on the play-suits were all wrong, and she used this detail as a weapon for sales resistance; but Javan, with a flash of genius, told Toa to wrap up a dozen packages of safety-pins with the suits. "A little surprise, Mrs. Sea Foam," he said, in the suave haberdashery tone he affects on certain occasions. "We are furnishing play-suits this season with the buttonholes made in the new style—the automatic-opening style, as we of the trade call it. But, always anxious to please, we are giving, absolutely free of charge, a package of safety-pins with each suit, so that the child (or parent), when he does not wish the suit to open automatically, need only apply a safety-pin, when the suit becomes a non-automatic-opener!

"Take them, Mrs. Sea Foam: I will attend to the payment. Good-bye; you must go now, for I see that the supercargo of Windward Village is anxious to make some large purchases. Just tell Sea Foam that I will attend to the payment. He will understand."

"He'll understand, all right," Javan muttered when he rose to enter in his account book, under the name of Sea Foam, the sum of six pounds. "That is equal to three months' rent," he reflected: "and as the play-suits cost fifteen shillings a dozen, the safety-pins one shilling and fourpence for the lot, my rent for three months has been reduced to a reasonable figure."

Javan returned to his counter mat just as the Windward Village supercargo, accompanied by a few of the Village Fathers, entered the station. The supercargo—a word introduced by the traders and converted into *tupakako*—is the business manager of the village. He checks the weighing of copra, calculates how much cash or goods

the village should receive, and divides either the money or the goods among the people. To-day the Windward Villagers stared at the goods for a little space; they made a number of the usual disparaging remarks and muttered that perhaps they had better wait till the schooner returned and buy direct from her. One wily old man voiced the opinion that it would be a good idea to send their money to one of the big trading stations in New York or London. Javan agreed whole-heartedly, adding that his dinner was getting cold, and anyway business was so terrible he might as well close the station for good. But by following their eyes he knew that they would buy a certain line of red-and-yellow caps, as well as the gross of picture handkerchiefs which he had placed in a not too conspicuous position—particularly to catch their eyes.

"I can see, Javan," the supercargo remarked presently, clearing his throat and shifting his eyes from the "smell soap" to the array of butterfly scent, "that you have some cheap caps and handkerchiefs. I wonder if the Leeward or Central Villagers have bought any such caps or handkerchiefs?"

"Certainly not," Javan informed him, knowing that the villagers require exclusive lines. "I have been keeping them particularly for Windward Village. Of course, if you do not want them they must go to the other villages—it is nothing to me, one way or another, for there will be no difficulty in disposing of such sensational lines." And then, sitting upright on the counter to facilitate the rolling of a cigarette: "Even the people of Tahiti and Honolulu have no such caps and handkerchiefs as these. I had them made to order in New York City particularly for Windward Village, for I knew that you would be satisfied with only the latest styles."

"This trader is a fine liar," one of the Village Fathers remarked appreciatively, but in the casual tone a man will use when saying: "All the planets follow the same ecliptic." However, he wanted to believe Javan, and he will make

himself do so before the day is over. Without a doubt, when he mentions the purchase to some member of another village, he will quote Javan word for word. "A special order," he will say. "Javan had them made for us in New York City." But this will not hurt business so far as the other villages are concerned, for when they come to complain because Windward Village alone had a special order Javan will be able to exhibit to their astonished eyes bolts of flowered silk (sometimes erroneously called rayon), and other exclusive lines, made in the great manufacturing centres of the world particularly for Leeward and Central Villages.

After a few questioning glances and affirmative nods the supercargo started bargaining, and shrewdly, too; but in the end, having haggled Javan down to half his original price, he bought the goods, leaving the station a bare two hundred per cent profit.

Next a package of firecrackers and a dozen clay marbles were bought for each child, and then, as the sum remaining was still large—or, at least seemed so by its appearance piled neatly on the counter—a stick of tobacco was bought for each man, a tin of talcum for each woman, and an assortment of lollipops for the children. As usual, they had bought nothing of substantial value.

While Toa wrapped the goods in newspaper Javan changed the remnant of their money into sixpences and pennies; then, with their goods under their arms, their cash in the village money-bag, they strolled importantly back to Windward Village. Javan watched them until they had turned the corner by Constable Benny's house, when, with the sigh of a man who has done an honest day's work, he closed the station, bathed, and went to the cook-house for his dinner.

But in Windward Village the fun has only begun. At dusk every villager will be in the clearing where the meeting house stands. And when they have all assembled, to the last toddler, the last beloved ancient, the supercargo will

hand each person his share: coloured caps and tobacco for the men, picture handkerchiefs and talcum for the women, firecrackers, marbles, and lollipops for the children. Then the supercargo will walk round the circle of villagers to hand each one a sixpence, and on a second round a penny or two, or even another sixpence, and so on until it is evident that there is not enough money left to go round again. The small remainder will be placed in the supercargo's private money-bag: it is his honorarium as business manager of the village, amounting to a pound or two a year.

And that night . . . on the outer beach . . . the young unmarried! There will be a wild time not soon to be forgotten! There will be a display of picture handkerchiefs around slim necks—picture handkerchiefs depicting dreadnoughts belching smoke, fire, and destruction, and bordered by the flags of all the nations! And there will be a redolence of highly scented talcum-powder to blend exotically with the salty sea air! And there will be red-and-yellow caps set at rakish angles, long cigarettes of real tobacco rolled in pandanus leaf, salvos of firecrackers, marble-shooting by the light of the tropic moon, dreamy mouthings of lollipops!

And next morning there will be gossip for dear old Mama when Toa comes to the trading station with Miss Red-Jones's picture handkerchief tied around his neck; and when, a few moments later, Miss Red-Jones trips demurely to Sea Foam's house, a red-and-yellow cap on her pretty head!

VIII

The Name: Manager of the Branch Store

In Javan's station, trading is divided in two periods: "the front-door period" and "the back-door period." The former lasts four or five days, the latter from the time the front door is closed to the return of the schooner—six months to a year—with a few exceptions, such as when a village makes a wholesale purchase, there is copra money to be paid out, or Javan is in the mood to yarn with the neighbours. During the first period he trades in person. As much as one hundred pounds will cross the counter the first day, half as much the second day, and so on until the sales have dribbled down to a mere two or three pounds, when the front door is closed and future sales are made through the back doorway.

The store-boy is supposed to attend to the back-door sales, but part of the time he has other duties: he must fish for the establishment, make into copra the coconuts that have been taken in trade for matches and tobacco, help William with the brewing and the bottle-washing, and last but not least, pursue his love affair with Miss Red-Jones.

Toa's father, The Name, is also a part of Javan's establishment, for he owns and runs the branch store. On the last day of the front-door period. The Name comes to the station to select about one hundred pounds' worth of goods, principally tobacco, matches, kerosene, soap, cheap dress goods, fish-hooks, and the things children buy. He pays for these goods in cash, at Javan's selling price minus fifteen per cent, so if he sells two hundred pounds' worth of goods in a year, which is his average, he makes thirty pounds. The Name therefore is a capitalist, and like many of his

kind he is stingy—the stingiest man on the island. He is so stingy that he insists on Toa marrying Miss Tern, and simply because this unprincipled girl has a chestful of clothes—which will obviate his buying her any.

Structurally, The Name is skinny, but his face is not so drawn and pinched as his soul. He is peculiarly noteworthy because of his eyes, which have the faculty of increasing and decreasing their diameter without in the least affecting their perfect circularity. When The Name is thoughtful his eyes are of an aperture 32, as a photographer would say when referring to the iris diaphragm of his lens. When he is in ordinary conversation or making a small sale his eyes expand and contract between a 16 and a 20, adjusting automatically their diaphragms in exact ratio to the importance of the picture being impressed on the emulsion of his brain. But when a man tramps into his store and slaps a pound note on the counter The Name's eyes expand to full portrait size—aperture 8.

Only once have his eyes been observed larger than an aperture 8. That was on a Sunday when he was holding afternoon service, he being one of the deacons, like most of the old men. For some weeks he had been questioning Javan in an effort to find a thrilling, forceful, and easily pronounced adjective or phrase to describe sin, and finally he had chosen "too heavy"—that is: sin is too heavy a weight or burden. For days he made Javan repeat the phrase, and for days he mispronounced it; for whenever one gives a native a word ending with a consonant, like "moon," he will pronounce it as though it ended with a vowel: "moonu"; and when one gives him a word ending with a vowel he will drop the vowel believing that he is thus speaking better English. So, to The Name, "too heavy" became "too heav," no matter how many times he was corrected.

Javan does not go to church often, for his religious convictions do not coincide with those of Sea Foam, but on the Sunday when The Name was to preach he attended.

The Name preached and preached about sin, he being very long-winded. He told the neighbours they were all sinners; he even admitted that in youth he had sinned a little himself, and that was why the Lord had visited him with so many boils. Slowly, deftly, taking advantage of numerous rhetorical subtleties, he developed a fine string of metaphors describing sin as a heavy burden—and with each metaphor his eyes expanded! Sin was a bag of copra bearing down on one's back (aperture 20). Sin was a greater burden than a wife and seven daughters (aperture 16). Sin was two bags of copra, two wives and fourteen daughters breaking the back of the wicked man, bowing his legs, hastening his descent to Hell (aperture 8). Then, abruptly, silence!

His eyes continued to expand!

He raised one hand aloft, with the palm toward the congregation, while they, the latter, sat rigid, spellbound, flabbergasted by the phenomenal sight of unlimited expansion! Those perfectly round eyes passed the portrait size! They broke the iris and, as it were, occupied the entire camera! It is a fact that not a vestige of his face remained visible; even the boil on his chin was obscured by his eyes. Javan became horribly fascinated. Bones, who sat next to him, muttered an ancient, heathen oath. There were gasps and hysterical screams. Then, suddenly booming from a mouth hidden somewhere behind those socketless eyes, came the grand climax:

"TOO HEAV! SIN IS TOO HEAV!"

It was very effective. Everybody laughed. The eyes contracted to an aperture 8, and the sermon went on.

One day, shortly after the schooner had left, The Name came to Javan to have a boil lanced, but he seemed anxious to delay the operation as long as possible. Over a pot of tea they spoke of a woman who had left for Rarotonga by the last schooner, there to undergo an operation for gall-stones. Javan expressed the opinion that the case

was hopeless, but The Name opined that she would live if in Rarotonga she could find some man to give her his blood.

"I knew a woman in Tahiti who swelled up and swelled up, like this," The Name said, demonstrating the size of her distended body by describing with both arms a circle, his finger-tips touching, his eyes expanding moderately. At the same time he drew in his chin and cocked his head in an attitude that expressed astonishment at the afflicted abdomen. "Her breath came in short gasps," The Name continued, gasping a few times. "She sent for a white doctor, and he examined her long and carefully, thumping her body and looking at her tongue and feeling her pulse." The Name eyed Javan with a diagnostic squint; then, wagging his head to illustrate in anticipation the next sentence, he went on: "But finally the doctor shook his head sadly, and he said: 'Woman, there is no hope for you! You will die!'

"Well, after a day or two she was still alive, but even worse than before, so she sent for a second white doctor—the most skilful one in the world, it's a fact! He examined her more carefully than had the first one; but when he had finished he, too, shook his head sadly, and he said: 'Woman, there is no hope for you! You will die!'

"Then the woman broke into tears. She wailed that indeed there was no hope for her, for both the white doctors had said that she would die. And the husband broke into tears. He cried: *'Aué-ué!* My poor woman! Alas! Alas! You will die!' "

At this point in the story The Name demonstrated graphically and orally the grief of the woman and her husband, incidentally upsetting the sugar-bowl with one of the sweeps of his skinny arm. It was dramatic.

"Well," The Name went on, after limbering his throat with a second cup of tea, while with a spoon Javan scooped up the spilled sugar, "about this time the neighbours told them of a third doctor, a great native savant

named Tiurai, who lived in the district of Paea. All the island world has heard of Tiurai; even you must have heard of him, Javan?"

Javan nodded his head. Tiurai ("July") was one of the cleverest old quacks the islands have produced. Tympanotomy, major amputations, and zoo-grafting were said to be routine work with him.

"Well," The Name continued, "they sent for Tiurai, and he examined her even more carefully than had the white doctors. He looked at her tongue, and he thumped her great swollen body, and he listened to her chest, and he rolled up her eyelids to examine the whites of her eyes; but finally even he shook his head sadly, like this, and he said: 'Woman, there is no hope for you! You will die! You will surely die!' "

The Name's body became limp; his eyes contracted to an aperture 32. He threw his hands down on the table, palms upward, in a gesture both of finality and frustration. The rattle of his knuckles on the wood eloquently declared that there was *positively* not a *hope,* for the woman was *doomed!*

He finished his second cup of tea, then straightened up with a jerk. Cocking his head to one side, his eyes small, his lips thrust out, figuratively he re-examined the patient; then, after a long pause, nodding betimes in profound thought: " 'But maybe, maybe, maybe she can be saved,' " he muttered, quoting Tiurai. " 'There is just one chance in ten million. Her life is in the hands of her husband. It's possible, just possible, that if he gives her his blood she may live!'

"Of course this scared the husband. He wept; and he cried that there was no hope, and that he, too, would die if he gave his blood. But little by little his courage came back; and when he saw the indignant glances of all the relatives, as well as of Tiurai, he felt ashamed, so he said that he would give her his blood."

There was a long pause for histrionic purposes; then

The Name went on: "So Tiurai got one of the big rice bowls that the Tahitians use for their coffee; then he got out his knife, and he cut one of the veins in the man's right arm, and filled the bowl with blood!"

There was another long pause. The Name rolled a cigarette (from Javan's tobacco), lit it, and drew in a lungful. Then, leaning forward, his eyes large with wonder, he raised a skinny index finger to the centre of his forehead and figuratively drew a line with it down along the bridge of his nose, across his lips, over his prominent Adam's apple, and through the centre of his chest, dividing himself, as it were, vertically in twain. "The right half of the husband," he affirmed, "turned as white as that bowl of sugar, but the left half stayed its natural colour! That was because all the blood had been taken out of the right side of the man!

"Then Tiurai got his pump-with-a-needle, and filling it full of the man's blood he pumped it in the woman's veins, pumpful after pumpful till the rice-bowl was empty. When this was done he again looked at her tongue, thumped her body, listened to her chest, and rolled up her eyelids to examine the whites of her eyes; but finally he straightened up, turned to the husband—who was stretched out on a mat, still half-white and half-brown—and he said: 'Man, you have saved your woman's life! She will live!' "

Again The Name threw his hands, palms upward, on the table, but this time in a gesture of finality and success. "The woman is alive to-day!" he said, his eyes now at full portrait aperture.

"And the husband?"

"He's alive, too; still white as a foreigner on his right side and brown as a native on his left! . . . Now, Javan, I will ask you to lance that boil—but gently, Javan, gently."

IX

The Tobacco and Match Trade

By glancing back one finds that one was discussing the two periods in Mr. Moonlight's trading station. Well, there is not a great deal more to tell about them. The Name takes his stock, the front door is closed, and from then on Toa takes care of the station when he is not busy elsewhere; but when he *is* busy the whole burden of trading falls on Javan's shoulders. He becomes so peevish, what with the everlasting demand of the customers to buy, buy, buy, that he swears he will leave the island for good.

Take the match and tobacco trade, for instance. It is the curse of a trading establishment. When the women have spent all their shillings on print and Swiss embroidery, and the men have squandered their substance on picture handkerchiefs and "balloon tyre" pants, then the old tobacco addicts start haunting the trading station. Day and night they come, on an average of one every half-hour, but oftener when Javan sits down for a cup of tea or lies on the counter mat with his head pillowed comfortably on a bolt of unbleached calico.

But at certain times the tobacco and match trade can be pleasant. Javan will even open the front door on a quiet evening when the sun is behind the coconut trees of Yato Point, a cool breeze passes through the open window, Toa and William are brewing in the cook-house, and he feels reasonably certain that business will not be annoyingly brisk. Yes; he likes to have them come for their tobacco and matches at such times. Often it is quite festive. A few of the Village Fathers, let us say, are sitting on the loafer's

bench on the front porch, gossiping as they go through the laborious process of rolling pandanus-leaf cigarettes; Benny and The Bird are in the station, and Javan is doing a moderate business, taking in as much as tenpence in cash and as much again in credits. Then, "Hello! It's Bones!" he exclaims as the disgraceful satyr shambles into the station, his somewhat unwieldy boar pig following behind him; and instead of "How's crops?" he can inquire, "How's the boar pig?" whereupon Bones will grin and start telling, in an unnecessarily loud tone, about certain of the pig's recent gallantries.

Bones and Javan can speak of many things, for the old man is an expert at fashioning pearl-shell fish-hooks, and he is the best deep-sea fisherman on the island. If Javan is going out for a night beyond the reef it is wise to ask Bones for advice. He, like the astrologers of old, will consult the heavens. If the Pleiades are rising at dawn it will be a good time for flying fish; if the moon is in her seventeenth night he warns Javan that the evil spirits are about, and the *yitoros* will rise out of the sea and seduce him; if it is cloudy the *ruvettus* will bite at three hundred fathoms down; if the moon lacks a day to being full the big-eyed *malau* will take a white fly. It is wise to consult Bones: his forecast is always correct.

Javan likes to have them come for their tobacco and matches at the proper times. And when it is dusk, and he has closed the trading station, bathed, and sat down for his cup of tea, he feels that he has done an honest day's work. He relaxes, smiles patronisingly at Mama as she hovers over the stove pretending she has something to do, though in fact there is not a thing in the world to do.

"Well, Mama, a good day in the trading station," he says. "Aye; business was quite brisk. Things are picking up, no doubt about it. Sea Foam weighed in four bags of copra this morning and I traded lollipops for fifteen eggs, ten of which, I firmly believe, will be edible. . . . You

will find them on the shelf by the medical supplies when you want them. Aye; the cash sales for the day totalled two shillings and eightpence, while the credit sales ran a little higher—but not alarmingly so, Mama, not alarmingly so. The depression at Danger Island is on the wane: prosperity is just around the coconut tree."

After a second cup of tea he sinks back more comfortably in his chair. The kerosene lamp is burning brightly now, swinging a little, when the wind touches it, from its nail on the wall. Through the open sides of the cookhouse he can see the lagoon: it is gleaming faintly, dull silver broken by a smudge of black where the point of Yato throws a shadow across the water. Farther out, beyond the two horns of the crescent-shaped islet, the trade wind has ruffled the water, breathed on it a magic breath that has transformed it to a tray of black diamonds. The village night life is awakening. A shadowy figure moves through the deepening dusk; there is a plash; the lagoon's dull silver sheen is broken by a widening circle of ripples; then gurgling sounds, whooping noises as one of the aged villagers disports himself in the water, turns somersaults and stands on his head.

Javan's mind wanders in happy tea-soothed delirium. For the blessed moment he is completely happy. He talks to Mama, telling her most anything that comes in his head, for she doesn't understand him very well, anyway. He tells her in one breath of the great sky-clippers that soon will be cleaving the clouds close to Danger Island. "Zip! Like that they go!" he shouts, "and they're in New Zealand!"

Then, with his usual versatility, shifting to psychology, "The collective-unconscious mind is a mushroom bed!" he cries. "Many mushrooms spring from it, some to grow tiny, some gigantic, like you and me. Each mushroom takes a part of its sustenance from the bed, a part from the air—this last, woman, being metaphorically the man's experience in conscious life. The mushroom dies and is absorbed in the nirvana-like bed, but it takes with it a

minute quantity of the nitrogen of knowledge to enrich the collective-unconscious soil. The purpose of life, therefore, is to propagate as many mushrooms as possible so that by infinitesimal degrees we may improve the spiritual soul until it will produce, at last, a rose—the perfect man!"

Then he raises his voice in a few verses to the notes of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song":

Put me upon an island where the pubs are few,
Put me among the most fer-o-cious li-ons of the zoo-oo,
Oh, put me upon a treadmill and I'll never fret,
But for Pity's sake don't put me with a suf-fra-gette.

He laughs; he whistles a refrain; he beats a rhythm with his fingers on the table; he gesticulates without speaking, just to startle dear old Mama. "Any water in the tea kettle, Mama?" he asks. "Aye; just a drop on the tea-leaves. . . . By a drop, woman, I do not mean one minim: it is a figure of speech denoting a small quantity. . . . Then why don't I say what I mean? . . . Ah, Mama, I was about to be angry with you, but it occurred to me that you are just struggling out of the neolithic culture: you are one of the heliolithic peoples—the lost tribes that sailed over the blue Pacific in search of a promised land, their eyes scanning the horizon for a first glimpse of the green palms of tropic islands waving their fans in welcome—while their brothers, Mama—the brothers of your people—were tramping westward across the steppes to form the nomadic tribes: the raiders, the conquerors, the nomad-criminals, the business magnates!"

"Pst!"

The sound comes with more venom than the hiss of a serpent—some place near the bath-house, probably under the tall coconut tree that bears the large clusters of nuts. But Javan does not hear it; he forces himself not to hear it; again he raises his voice in song:

Oh, Hardpan Jake from the head of the lake,
With ha'r on his chist, that's me!
I've pawed this earth from the day of my birth
With a spirit wild and free!

"Pst!"

"Yes, Mama," Javan shouts, endeavouring to convince himself that he has heard no one, that there is no one to hear, that life can go on serenely in the cook-house for evermore; "the heliolithic people, Mama! Think of 'em, in canoes, scanning the horizon. . . ."

"Pst!"

"I was just reading a book by a man named Einstein —about relativity, Mama. I agree with him on most of his theory, but his mathematics . . ."

"Pst!"

At this point Mama thrust her head out of the cook-house, and, as she sees on the blackest night as well as in daylight, whether or not her eyes have been staring at the light, she immediately cries: "It's Deacon Bribery! He wants to buy something!"

"Mama," Javan replies in a slow, measured period, "you tell Deacon Bribery that if in ten seconds I find him within my premises I'll, I'll, I'll . . ."

"Haw, haw, haw!" comes from the darkness under the coconut tree. Silence; then:

"Pst!"

"Hell! Damn!" Javan screams, quoting his profane retainer, William. He jumps to his feet, stalks out of the cook-house (giving Mama a glare of concentrated venom *en route*). He crosses the five yards to the trading station, unlocks the door, enters, stumbles over the broom, cracks his head against the wall (which, incidentally, he bashes with his fist, it being too dark for anyone to see him). On finding that he has left his matches in the cook-house, he gropes for a box, smearing his hands betimes in a puddle of stale brew. When the lamp is lighted he sees that

despicable old Deacon Bribery in the doorway, grinning.

"What d' y'u want?" Javan snarls, and the old imbecile whines: "Just a penny cut of tobacco for the old man, Javan dear."

"I'm not a dear!"

"Don't be angry, little Javan."

"I'm not little, either."

"The old man is hungry for a morsel of tobacco."

Javan cuts the fellow an undersized piece of twist and flings it at him. "All right; where's your money?"

"The old man has no money, little Javan. Put the tobacco penny in the big book, Javan dear."

The thoughts which pass through Mr. Moonlight's brain are best left unsaid. He has been coerced into giving a man credit, for had he refused, the deacon would have stood all night under the coconut tree, making psting noises. Returning to the cook-house to have Mama bandage his hand, he tells her that business is terrible, that the prosperity he had thought to be just around the coconut tree is a myth, that he has definitely made up his mind to leave by the next schooner.

X

Medical Practice on One of His Majesty's Coral Atolls

On an atoll, where there is contact with the outside world only through the semi-annual visit of a trading schooner, a man should have a working knowledge of many crafts: he should be able to bake his own bread, butcher his own pig, devise a coconut-oil lamp when the kerosene tin is empty, sew a pair of trousers, bind a book, and catch a fish. Also, aware that in an emergency it might require a year to send for a doctor, he should have a smattering of medical science: he should be able to set a broken bone, extract a tooth, lance a boil, administer divers pills and lotions.

Javan Moonlight admits to only a scant knowledge of the subject in question: about as much as the average farmer gleans from his massive volume, *The Fireside Doctor and Veterinary Surgeon;* but if his neighbour, King-of-the-Sky, has eaten the whole roast pig at a sitting, and later has been discomposed by an unaccountable tenderness in the region below the chest, Mr. Moonlight knows the remedy. Or again, if his branch store-keeper is suffering from a boil he can lance the thing with deftness worthy of his colleagues in the great clinics of civilisation. Or still again, if it is a pain in the neck, a common cold, or a toothache; if Bones has come in from deep-sea fishing with a chill, or Parson Sea Foam is suffering from a more than usually heavy atmosphere of Puritanic disapproval, Javan can ponder the case, and decide there is indicated, an aspirin.

Thus far and little farther goes Mr. Moonlight's knowledge of medicine; but even with this scant equipment he is probably of more value (or less danger) to the island

than his colleague, Pau, the witch doctor. This man is an inspired practitioner, while his wife, Bosun-woman, is the undertaker: a macabre pair, one of them dispatching the people with a singular skill, the other one burying them. Pau practises ancient laws of medicine which may have been devised to do away with the physically unfit. If this last was the case it was a cruel but a wise practice, for the problem of over-population was severe until the white men came and settled it with a few judiciously scattered *Mycobacterium tuberculosis.*

Pau's inspiration and his knowledge of medicine came in the usual way—through a dream. Often he tells about this dream. He states that he was wafted to the great hospital in Tahiti, where he was met by three white surgeons whom he knew to be wise indeed, for each had a long black beard. When Pau strode into the hospital the surgeons approached him and nodded their heads. "Ah! It is Pau!" they exclaimed. Then two of them grasped him by either arm while the third led him to the operating room, where they showed him a dead body. They dissected it. They said: "This, Pau, is the liver, the stomach, the heart." They showed him how things like Tridacna clams and sea urchins might take possession of the internal organs and cause terrible diseases; and they showed him how the things should be removed. Then they said: "That will do for the present, Pau. Come again to-morrow."

On the second night he dreamed of them again. This time they anatomised another body, showing Pau the arteries, the nerves, the muscles; and they demonstrated how he should dislodge things like sea crabs and lizards that evil spirits had put into people's blood-vessels; and how he should straighten nerves that had become kinked, or deaden them by pressure; and how, by pounding, pressing, and twisting, he should untie knots that had formed in muscles. Then the three surgeons again sent Pau away, instructing him to come for his third and last lesson on the morrow.

On the third night Pau dreamed that the three savants showed him a skeleton. They broke each of its bones, and they demonstrated how he should set them, how the coconut oil should be rubbed in, the splints of coconut spathe fixed over green hernandia leaves, the bandages wrapped. Also, they dislocated each of the joints, then forced them in place by firm pressure with the bare foot. After the luxated and fractured skeleton had been made articulate the surgeons placed over Pau's shoulders a flowing black robe, and they said: "Doctor Pau, you are now one of us, a great savant. Go back to Danger Island and cure the people, but always remember to call us for a consultation when you are in doubt about one of your cases. We will be here to give you advice."

Then Pau woke up and started his medical practice.

One of Pau's case histories may be instructive: Deacon Bribery has colic—or at least so Javan diagnoses the case. Pau is sent for. He puts on his steel-rimmed spectacles, approaches the deacon with a crude mat-side manner, sits cross-legged beside him, smiles, stiffens a finger, and prods him. The deacon screams. "Ah!" Pau murmurs, "there is a tenderness in the stomach." He prods again, scowls, ponders. "The spirit of your great-uncle Watu has got his fingers in this," he mutters. "Yes, no doubt about it, the deacon feels pain." Pau leans over to put his ear over the afflicted part. He listens; then straightening up, "It's a prickly sea urchin!" he exclaims. "Your great-uncle's spirit has maliciously put a prickly sea urchin in your stomach!"

Silence, apprehension. Pau sits perfectly still for perhaps three minutes; even his eyes seem fixed in his sockets. Then, slowly at first, he starts patting his thighs and mumbling a chant—the *rupé,* the age-old ritual of exorcism. Soon his hands are beating his thighs rapidly, his head is thrown back, his eyes are closed. The chant grows in volume and becomes modulated by sudden inflexions of voice, screams, grunts, and husky mutterings,

weird enough to frighten away even the doughty spirit of Great-uncle Watu. The relatives huddle together in genuine terror; Deacon Bribery literally trembles with fear. Then abruptly, the chant breaking off in the middle of a verse, or, as Pau would say, at the instant the spirit has been frightened from the house, Pau leans forward quickly, cups his hands over the painful area, makes a motion of digging something out of the deacon's innards, and, jumping to his feet, rushes out of the house to throw the imaginary object in the lagoon.

"I got him, all right," Pau says when he returned. "It was a prickly sea urchin, all right." Then, as though to brook no dispute, "You are well," he states . . . and the man *is* well; but whether he has recovered because of the removal of a prickly sea urchin or through suggestion can be left to the more learned to decide.

This case history is not flattering to Pau, yet the man is no fool. With his expert technique in massage he often relieves the patient; his knowledge of the human skeleton is by no means elementary—he never bungles in setting a bone—and, most important of all, he has the confidence of his patients: when he tells them they will recover they often *do* recover; and when he tells them they will die, as often enough he does, they die forthwith. And before we allow ourselves too complacent a snicker over Pau's tapus, diagnoses, and remedies, we should recall the civilised man's therapeutic and salutiferous nostrums which are advertised for use internally or externally, a quick and certain remedy for all diseases of man or beast. We should recall how Farmer X shaves his head during the full of the moon to make his hair grow; how pregnant Mother Y avoids the sight of a fire lest her baby be born with an ugly birth-mark; how quick Z attributes his glowing health to his habit of drinking a gallon of water every day, while his next-door neighbour attributes his glowing health to his not having tasted water for thirty years. We should recall how nordic wizards claim they can find

hidden oil, water, and minerals by the magic pointings of a forked stick; how phylacteries and charms are still worn by millions of the enlightened to ward off the evil eye; how Marcel Proust records of his Aunt Léonie that she "never spoke save in low tones, because she believed there was something broken in her head and floating loose there; but she never remained long, even when alone, without saying something, because she believed it was good for her throat, and by keeping the blood there in circulation it would make less frequent the chokings to which she was liable." These primitive tapus and superstitions of Danger Island amuse and astonish us only because of their strangeness, while the parallel absurdities of civilised man escape our notice because of their familiarity. Pau is a no greater fool than thousands of quacksalvers, messiahs, and politicians who are to-day offering the enlightened world innumerable panaceas for its ills.

One of Javan Moonlight's greatest problems is to ascertain how far he should trust himself in medical practice. It is scarcely necessary to state that he would not treat even minor ailments were a legitimate doctor available, for Javan has a high respect for the medical profession and is quite able to evaluate accurately his own fumbling efforts. However, he believes that Old Mother Nature has in her medicine chest certain herbs and lotions which are as effective as the best laboratory drugs; and, believing this, he makes it a practice to conduct to her consulting-rooms all those who are willing to trust themselves to her care. It is better, he believes, even that they should die under her care than that he should risk killing them through his own malpractice. Often he is perplexed when his patient refuses to call on the aforementioned elderly lady; then, not knowing how to treat him, let alone diagnose his affliction, he can only play safe by giving him a blessing and an aspirin. In the matter of tooth extraction, however, he has laid down the law, which brings one to William's Dental Clinic.

Many years ago an unwise missionary placed a pair of dental forceps in William's hands. The heathen forthwith became the dentist of Danger Island; and when Javan took over the dispensary he was only too glad to leave dental work to William, while the retainer was pleased also, for he gloated over the torture of his victims. Moreover, William always got the tooth out—a record which, due to lack of technique, strength, and callousness, Javan could not hope to emulate.

William was not over-nice about sterilisation or even plain cleanliness. His forceps were as black and rusty as a pair of old wire pliers. Never, though, to Javan's knowledge, among the scores of people whose teeth the heathen pulled, was there a single case of septic gums.

"However," Javan states, referring to the retainer's clinic, "William is not allowed to pull teeth to-day except under my personal observation, and this is because we ran out of tobacco about a year ago.

"William is a tobacco addict, no more, no less. One day without the drug changes his entire relation to life. He becomes too cantankerous for any kind of association with his friends, his own household, or even with me. When, on this particular occasion, the last of the tobacco had gone up in smoke, William could be seen snooping about the village, his eyes prying under houses and in rubbish heaps for cigarette-snipes. Later he was noticed paring down his old pipes and smoking the shavings; and still later he was caught red-handed stealing tea from my cook-house; and finally, most painful of all, he was observed in the groves by the outer beach, sampling the island flora: the leaves of the hernandia, the cordia, the pandanus, the *gardenia tahitensis,* even coconut-husk and seaweed! No good; they all made smoke, that was all.

"Then one day we heard the galvanising rumour that a certain youth, The Bird, had a one-ounce tin of tobacco which he would sell!

"The lad was mobbed. Bones, William, the chief of

police, even I threatened, cajoled, begged. But the lad was adamantine: he demanded one pound sterling for his miserable tin of tobacco. This is a fabulous sum on Danger Island, where the yearly income per man does not exceed ten shillings. William scraped together eight shillings and offered them to The Bird. No good. After searching the lad's premises the chief of police threatened a long jail sentence with very hard labour. No good. Bones offered his boar pig. No good. I paid the pound and got the tobacco. It lasted me three weeks, for I became as adamantine as had been The Bird: even William could not wheedle from me the tiniest morsel.

"For weeks after this William stalked through the village with thunder on his brow. As soon as he realised that I would give him none of the tobacco he cut me cold. He told me I was a beachcomber, a crooked trader, a capitalist of the same ilk as that fellow The Bird. Often he would stand before The Bird's house, waiting for the greedy youth to appear, when he would fling at him a glance of singeing contempt accompanied by a sinister warning. And, alas! Only too soon the heathen's chance came: The Bird was prostrated suddenly with an aching wisdom tooth!

"The pain must have been terrible. The poor youth screamed so loudly that I could hear him far away in the trading station! William was called at once!"

At this point Mr. Moonlight (who had opened at least two too many bottles of the Special No. IV that day) sat upright on the counter, reached for the brew bottle and found it empty. "Toa!" he called sharply, glancing toward the open doorway. There was no reply. "William!" he called. No reply. "Mama!" he called. No reply. Sighing, he swung his legs off the counter. "You see," he growled, with an expansive gesture of his long arms, "this is the way I am served!" Easing himself to the floor, he tramped to the store-room, at the same time muttering that some stupid people claim South Sea traders have an easy time

of it. There was a clinking of bottles in the store-room, but still Javan's voice could be heard growling to the effect that, for all he knew, a whole flock of customers might appear at any moment. "Easy time of it!" he snarled as he tramped back to the counter, his arms full of the Special No. IV. "Half the time I have to serve the customers myself; and if I don't scold William and Mama daily—aye, hourly!—there'll never be a stick of wood in the cook-house or a morsel of food to sustain me through the arduous task of the day!"

After fortifying himself with a glass of his excellent brew he mellowed by perceptible degrees. His eyes fixed on a bolt of No. 1689 striped shirting which lay on a shelf directly across the room from him, he returned to the subject of The Bird's toothache, and apostrophised with startling vehemence:

"Ah, thoughtless youth! Had only you given William the tobacco! But no; your greed blinded you to the exigencies of the future! Alas! what remorse you must have felt when the godless heathen dug the forceps in your tender gums, his bony knee betimes across your neck! What remorse you must have felt when he, the heathen, tussled with you, the Christian: when he gripped the aching tooth with the forceps, joggled it a little, grinned like a Tomás de Torquemada, and hissed something about a pound sterling for an ounce of tobacco! Ah, youth, youth! And when he joggled the tooth again and again and still again, how you must have hated him, poor dear, old, tobacco-hungry William the heathen! Little then did you value the flashy trade goods you had bought with the one pound sterling, the striped pants with pockets both in front and in back, the sailor blouse, the bandana handkerchief, the marbles, and the singing top! You would have given them, yea, and more, too, to have been done with the pain! Ah, youth! How you must have hated William when, after what seemed hours of torture—but was really only fifteen or twenty minutes—he loosened his grip on the forceps and

removed his knee from your neck, for the first time in his professional career unable to extract a tooth! And when he shook his head, and grinned maliciously, and muttered, 'Damn! Hell! Go ta Hell! No can help! The son of a gun no come out!' and then sent you weeping back to your house!"

Javan sank back on the counter with a sigh. "As I have said," he concluded, "William is no longer in charge of the dental clinic. But still he pulls teeth, while I stand back with a dose of aromatic spirits of ammonia, ready to revive the patient. And always, when he has pulled a tooth, he manages (by sleight of hand, or by directing my attention toward one of the village maidens tripping daintily along the road) to deposit the gory forceps in my box of surgical instruments, where they mess up everything. And finally, when he sees me removing them and sterilising them, as well as the other instruments which have been messed up, he gives me a great guffaw for my pains. As a matter of fact, he is a very objectionable character: his aggressiveness has never been domesticated."

XI

George the Bosom Friend

The Sunday morning before the villagers were to go to their copra islets Javan stumbled down the balcony steps, washed his face at the tank, snarled at a rooster that was shrieking in the hernandia tree, and entered the cook-house. Shafts of sunlight were beginning to touch with silver the highest trade-wind clouds, he noticed, but without the slightest pleasurable response.

Mama dropped the eggs in the frying-pan, according to instructions, at the exact instant Javan put his foot over the cook-house threshold; then, glancing at him with the grim smile of a Cumaean sibyl, she tacitly snapped: "I'd like to hear just one growl from you this morning; I put the eggs in the frying-pan at the exact instant you entered the cook-house!" She didn't really speak, though, for one glance at Javan was enough to warn her that he was not approachable until after his first bowl of coffee. However, having by now forgotten all about the eggs, she patted a wrinkle or two out of her black lawn dress, donned for the morning service, then moved her blue silk parasol to a position beyond her employer's reach.

The coffee-pot being on the table, Javan snatched it and filled his bowl; then: "The eggs, woman, the eggs!" he snarled. "Don't stand there looking at yourself; can't you see the eggs are burning?"

After this soul-satisfying outburst he drank his first bowl of coffee piping hot, and glanced out of the cook-house window to where, high above the azure lagoon, glistening against a sky clear and blue, the trade-wind clouds gleamed like burnished silver plates. They were beautiful. "Look, Mama!" he cried. "The sky is full of shiny new silver

shillings! If we had all that money in the trading station we could reduce the price of lollipops! How they gleam! . . . Serve the eggs, Mama dear; I like them a little burnt; a deep rich brown merging into black, like that far-off cloud-rack above the uninhabited islet—old gold above the sombre gloom of distant coconut groves."

"It's George's turn now," Mama said, for, of course, she was aware that Javan's first bowl of coffee had mellowed his soul and cured his liver; then she laughed in her own cynical way, reminding one of the cackling of an old hen who is trying to shame her contemporaries by remarking that she alone lays Extra Special Number One Eggs. "George's turn, they say," she continued, at the same time giving her shoulders their characteristic shrug. Dishing up the eggs, she placed them before her master, commenting casually that they might be just a trifle burned, but nevertheless she had put them in the frying-pan at the exact instant Javan had stepped over the threshold, and, anyway, it was all George's fault, for she could not keep her mind off him and Miss Red-Jones.

"Mama," Javan cried as he drank his second bowl of coffee and picked at the edible parts of the eggs, "do you mean to say that Miss Red-Jones, our parson's eldest daughter, is being unfaithful to Toa, and with Toa's bosom friend George?"

"It isn't quite certain yet," Mama replied; "but if he didn't make love with her last night he will some other night, he being Toa's bosom friend. I think it's shameful that nobody knows for sure. Some say he did and some say he didn't, and Miss Red-Jones and George won't say a thing. I'll ask them again, at the morning service, if I can get the seat next to one of them, and I'll tell you about it at dinner-time."

"Ah, Mama, I will be on pins and needles till I hear. I will not be able to relax. You must have dinner fifteen minutes earlier than usual."

"Yes, Javan," Mama replied, picking up her blue silk

parasol and limping to the cook-house door. "There's Deacon Bribery going to the bell-house now, so I must hurry if I want to get the seat next to Miss Red-Jones or George, and with my rheumatism so bad I don't know how I'll ever make it. Don't fret till I come back, Javan. I'll not wait till dinner-time; I'll come right after the service and tell you about it so your Sunday won't be spoiled. Don't forget. . . . Ah! There goes George now! . . ." And, without telling Javan what not to forget—an oversight which caused him no anxiety—she hobbled out of the cook-house, scarcely remembering, in her effort to overtake George, to open her blue silk parasol.

Now, George is an important character in this love story, but because of one's natural diffidence, or modesty, or because one's puritan upbringing makes it exceedingly difficult to be pure-minded (like Mama), one has avoided speaking of him at length. Now one can avoid the subject no longer.

Physically George is a handsome youth, a few years older than Toa, more self-sufficient, not so impulsive, and with a very high opinion of the superior intelligence and ability of George. He ranks high among the local youths because of the ownership of a trench-coat, a bowler hat, and a pair of squeaking shoes with bulldog toes and fancy back-straps, size 12½, extra wide. When on special occasions he dons all three of these properties there is quite a sensation —a sensation which never grows stale, because George is too wise to diminish it by frequent repetition.

George is Toa's *bosom* friend. This, too, is important, for on Danger Island a bosom friend is not the same as a common friend. George will be Toa's bosom friend for life; George can refuse Toa nothing—not even his trench-coat, his bowler hat, or his squeaking shoes; if George burns Toa's house down, seduces his sweetheart, or steals his coconuts, Toa will simply say: "But it is all right, for he is my bosom friend." This friendship may be difficult to understand, for with us a friendship is measured by

what we can "get out of" a man. Often it has a sentimental background, demonstrating that we derive emotional satisfaction from the friend, and in this case the friendship lasts only as long as the sentiment. Or it may have an intellectual background. An author and a chemist may admire one another; but after long association each begins to understand much of the other's special knowledge: the admiration turns to contempt; the friendship ceases.

But to George and Toa, and many other Danger Islanders, a bosom friendship may have no foundation in sentiment or admiration. One of the parties, perhaps as a whim or because of advice from an older person, decides to make the other party his friend. Approaching the other, he says: "Let us be bosom friends." The other probably agrees at once. The partnership is formed. The friends do not then rush into one another's arms: they handle matters with more honesty and refinement. One of them kills a pig, and when the creature is roasted he carries it, with a few side dishes, to the house of his friend. Arriving, Friend Number One of the roast pig cries: "May you live, my bosom friend! I have food. Let us eat." A few days later Friend Number Two feasts Friend Number One. As the years roll by they may dislike one another, but the friendship is never dissolved. The convention in this is as ineluctable as the convention that a youth shall not experience sexual love until he has been made into a man. It is governed by tapus more dreaded than the tapus of civilisation.

There is yet to be explained Mama's statement that George and Miss Red-Jones may have been alone on the outer beach the night before. If this proves true, then George has acted more as Toa's friend than his betrayer. Toa and Miss Red-Jones have been faithful for many days, but this cannot continue. Each youth on the island has the right to unlimited promiscuity before he or she settles down to married life. Both Toa and Miss Red-Jones look forward to this experience with a normal amount of

curiosity and excitement, but it does not affect their love. After a few months of promiscuous love-making they will return to one another if they have not found more congenial mates. In the latter eventuality they will part with mutual agreement and good-will. It is George's privilege and duty to act as the intermediary, to separate gently the two lovers so they may experience the salutary adventure of promiscuity.

"It was a false report," Mama said when she had limped back from church. "That terrible old gossip, Deacon Bribery, started the story, but you never can believe a word he says. It is simply scandalous the way he gossips about everybody. He said he had seen George and Miss Red-Jones walk into the magnolia bushes; but now Pau says that they didn't do anything of the kind! It is getting so you never know what to believe on this island!"

"Where did Pau get his information?"

"Oh!" Mama exclaimed. "Pau knows everything. He is never wrong—and that's because of the spirits. He talks with the spirits every night, and they tell him all kinds of things."

"Aye, Mama, and Pau informs you of his findings, whereupon you come dashing to the cook-house, in a manner totally out of keeping with the dignity of your years, to repeat his figments to me as gospel truth. . . . Now, Mama, just when you were leaving the cook-house to go to church you told me to be sure not to forget something; but you overlooked mentioning what that something was. I have been on tenterhooks the entire morning wondering what it is that I am not to forget."

For some moments Mama stood perfectly still, the wrinkles on her brow creased deeper than usual as she registered profound thought. Then, with a sigh: "I've forgotten, Javan," she said—"but it may have been about my rheumatism."

Javan in turn sighed. "Why should I be interested in your rheumatism?" he asked testily.

"Because I am going to leave you to-morrow," she replied, a mistiness coming in her eyes. "I am going to Pau's house early in the morning to have my regular treatment. It may take a week or two. Don't be angry, Javan; William will do your cooking till I come back."

"William will *not* do my cooking. I shall find some Mongolian-eyed maiden to cook for me."

"Yes, that's right," Mama said, smiling sweetly. "You get some nice maiden of your own age, somebody like Miss Tern, and Miss Red-Jones, and Miss Tears—and if they have any babies . . ."

"Mama! I spoke of a maiden to cook for me. Go, woman; I am quite angry with you. You would not trust your worthless bag of bones to my expert medical skill, but you have decided to go instead to Witch Doctor Pau. Of course, we hope that he does not succeed in sending you to Paradise; but if he does so, then, of course, you will have a lovely funeral under the able direction of Bosun-woman. Go, woman; to-morrow I sail to Matauea!"

XII

The Art of Living Gracefully

Ko and Frigate Bird Islets, as well as the greater part of the main islet, are under a tapu which is known as *ra'ui*. This is a widespread Polynesian word which may be translated, first, as a "no trespassing" sign, for the islets under the *ra'ui* restriction are closed for the greater part of the year so the coconuts may accumulate, the taro grow to maturity, the sea birds and coconut crabs breed unmolested. The second, and seemingly contradictory, definition is, figuratively, "you shall trespass," for at the *time* of *ra'ui* all the villagers are obliged to go to their islets and enter into the work of copra-making.

At this time, the community-owned lands being open to the food-gatherers and copra-makers, the islanders waken from a lethargy of nearly four months to enter into a period of production.

A few nights before the *ra'ui* the Village Fathers meet to decide that the time has come to visit their islets. They talk far into the night, loudly, and, a stranger would believe, with ill-feeling; but they are on the best of terms, and the meeting could terminate in a few moments with everything amicably settled if it were not that the Fathers enjoy airing their opinions.

They are assembled in a body known as the "Company" —another word borrowed from the traders. Javan often attends their meetings and even has had a voice in their debates, but he has always been puzzled as to how they arrive at a decision. A vote is never taken, and one dissenting voice is enough to reject a proposal; yet, after a sufficient amount of argumentation to sublimate the souls of the Fathers, without ayes or nays or anything definite

being stated, the Company meeting breaks up with no one in doubt as to the final and irrevocable decision.

The Fathers are the governors of the island. They decide such matters as the request of Deacon Bribery for a new canoe. If it is granted they will set aside certain days when all the men must help him build it. They decide how many coconuts Miss Tears shall be fined for stealing birds' eggs; or what each person's work will be during the coming *ra'ui:* how many nuts he or she must gather, how many days will be devoted to clearing the land and weeding the taro-beds. And they set aside days for community fishing, dancing, games of skill such as spear-throwing, wrestling, coconut-husking.

When the Fathers have come to one of their tacit decisions it is the duty of Constable Benny to cry the new law through the villages. The following evening he dresses for the occasion in his khaki suit and his trench helmet, and walks pompously down the road, followed by a number of the young unmarried. Before each house he stops and, in a stentorian voice, cries something of this kind:

"Sit prettily, you people in this house, and listen to my words. This is the thought of the Village Fathers: Tomorrow at daybreak you will carry your canoes to the lagoon, and when Chief of Police Ura gives the signal you will race to the copra islets. There will be a *ra'ui* of two months. Each man of you will gather two hundred coconuts, each woman will gather one hundred, each child fifty. You will husk them, split them, and lay them on the drying platforms before night.

"And you people in this house, listen to my words and beware: There will be no stealing of sea birds and coconut crabs. You will feed your pigs only the immature, fallen coconuts, and each man will have but four drinking nuts a day. If you disobey this law"—here the constable makes a growling sound and everybody laughs—"I will put you in the iron house, and make you work, and thrash you, swish! like that!

"I have finished. Lie down prettily and sleep, for I go."

Then, as though not to pain the villagers with too much seriousness at one time, the young unmarried render an indelicate song in their peculiar guttural monotone. Everybody shouts with laughter—but the law of the Village Fathers goes into effect.

This system of government, ancient as the Polynesians themselves, exists to-day on only a few of the more primitive South Sea atolls. It is satisfactory on Danger Island because the place is virtually self-supporting. Iron wares are the only things the people would miss should the traders cease visiting the island. The natives have not developed an economic society in which luxuries are considered indispensable, where prosperity is dependent upon waste and the continual production and distribution of articles not essential to a sane and healthful life. When they have developed such a society a form of government will be needed that stimulates individual competition: the happy days will have passed for ever.

Planters and traders in the South Seas curse the natives because they will not work steadily and conscientiously. "The shiftless Kanakas!" they growl. "Here I am, offering them fifteen shillings a month, with beef on Sundays and rice every bloody day; but do you think I can keep a gang? Not a hope!"

And Javan Moonlight, taking up the defence of the shiftless Kanakas, replies: "These white traders cannot understand that the natives have a point of view. The white man's work is not congenial to them: it makes them unhappy, and why should they be unhappy? The daily rice and the Sunday beef is poorer food than their own taro and fish. And after a year's work what have they gained? An acquired taste for tobacco and alcohol which will force them to do more unpleasant work, and a few cheap trade goods—unessentials which are not worth a fraction of the misery they have suffered to acquire them.

"On the other hand"—and here Mr. Moonlight rises

to his subject—"the natives enjoy working in their own way, at their own tasks. Also, they understand the purpose of this work and evaluate it at its real worth. For instance, Bones makes fish-hooks that are works of art. It is with him a hobby as well as a craft. He will spend a whole day polishing the shank of a pearl-shell hook. Often the completed article will require a week's work; but when at last it is finished, with its picturus leader lashed in place, his eyes will sparkle with pride and satisfaction. He will fondle it, chuckle over it, and, showing it to the neighbours, expound at length on its qualities. He could not have derived the same satisfaction from chopping open a thousand coconuts a day for a sour-faced planter.

"King-of-the-Sky's craft is paddle-making. His paddles are shaped so cunningly that, when dug through the water, they give a peculiar singing note. Many a day have I sat with him under the big hernandia tree in Central Village, listening to him chant old epics as he polishes the blade of a paddle with a strip of shark-skin, or holds it horizontally to squint along its loom, or rubs his hand fondly over its sleek handle.

These men are craftsmen, and a craftsman is a more valuable addition to a community than a salesman or a manipulator of automatic machinery. Even though the craftsman produces less and inferior goods—the latter is seldom the case—the community can well afford the loss in lieu of the artistic development resulting from creative effort, as well as its humanising effect. A craftsman loves his work: he studies it, applies his mind to the refinement of its details. Incidentally he develops thereby a mind capable of creative thought; but more than anything else, he derives from his work a sense of achievement which fills his whole being with delight.

"It is the same when the work is done communally. When the entire village gathers to assist Deacon Bribery build his new canoe it becomes a time of festival. Out of the sixty men in the village four will work at hollowing

the logs; another four will shape the outrigger and cross-booms; a few others will adze down the washboards, while most of the old men will sit in the shade to plait sennit or simply to smoke and talk. During the morning the young men will laugh and shout as they dive in the lagoon for Tridacna clams, while at the same time a dozen youngsters will be climbing coconut trees for drinking nuts, and the women will be gossiping in the cook-houses as they make their native ovens and fill them with taro puddings, fish, pigs, fowls.

"Probably six men could do the work that is done by sixty; but why should they? Why should six men have all the pleasure? This is a festival; there is good fellowship among the neighbours; there will be a big feast in the evening; all the gossip of the villages will be sorted, pondered, and disseminated; there will be much joking and singing, and, more than likely, the young men will have an exciting wrestling match, while the maidens will practise their New Year's dance. It is only incidental that a certain amount of work will be done on the deacon's canoe. But what of it? There are many days to come, and, after all, what do men live for save to experience the greatest possible amount of pleasure? When work is unpleasant a man is a fool to work.

"This is the way we manage things at Danger Island, particularly during the period of *ra'ui;* but all this will be changed if the land is divided (parcelled out) as the Reverend Johns and Governor Withers wish. It is not a communism that has been forced upon the people, but one that has developed slowly, naturally, by imperceptible degrees; and it is successful on this atoll as a result of a simple and salutary perception of the art of living gracefully."

XIII

The Villagers Sail to the Islet of Ko

At dawn on the morning of the *ra'ui* the men of Central Village stroll across their islet, bush-knives in their hands or axes across their shoulders, toward their temporary settlement on the north side of the islet. Later in the morning the women and children will follow them. They have thirty wattle-and-thatch huts on the outer beach, at the edge of the trees, where the full force of the easterly wind sweeps past them. There they live for a month or two, making copra now and then, but spending most of their time combing the reef for lobsters and shell-fish, diving in the deep crevices to swim to sea for turtles, singing, dancing, love-making, amusing themselves simply but satisfactorily.

In Leeward and Windward Villages imperfectly defined shadows move from the huts to the beach. Great sailing-canoes are being carried to the water; masts are being stepped and sails bent. One by one the sails are hoisted, sheeted home, and left to slat in the light puffs of wind. Presently, with the rapidly brightening dawn, the women and children appear. They carry bundles of matting, squealing pigs and squawking fowls, babies, paddles, fish-poles, spears, pudding-bowls, a lantern or two from the trading station: all the necessaries of a Danger Island family. These are loaded in the canoes; then the people sit on the outrigger cross-booms and the washboards to smoke and talk until the signal comes to sail.

With the first glow of sunlight the chief of each village gives the preconcerted signal by tapping sharply on the side of his canoe. They shove off; paddles sing through the water until the wind, dropping from above the coconut

trees, fills the sails and the canoes leap forward, racing for the *ra'ui* islets four miles across the lagoon.

Usually Javan leaves a half-hour later than his neighbours, for he loves to watch the sails from the trading station balcony. It is a glorious sight: sailing canoes racing for the distant islets; brown sails of plaited pandanus leaf; the two square yards of red-and-white print on Bones's one-man canoe; spritsails and leg-o'-mutton sails of unbleached calico; the two jib-topped sails on King-of-the-Sky's great canoe; a few green fronds in the bows of little craft sailed by children; and finally, Parson Sea Foam's thirty-man *Kairakia* (Eater-of-Terns) with its three masts supporting as many sails. There are two strong men at the steering paddles; Sea Foam himself is in the bows, conning her past the coral heads, and her hull is deep in the water with the parson's family as well as many of their relatives, squatting on the household gear piled high above the washboards. In the centre of the canoe, aft of the mainmast, sitting cross-legged on a great pile of matting, Javan can see Miss Red-Jones and her exquisite sister, Miss Tears. Their bright red dresses stand out sharply against the white mainsail.

Presently, Toa comes to tell Javan that their sailing canoe is ready, and to remind him that already he has broken the law by remaining in the village after the others have left. He locks the trading station door; then, with Toa on the forward cross boom to balance the canoe, they scud across the lagoon. Once clear of the bay, the windward stay tautens and the mast creaks; spray flies from the torpedo-shaped bow; the forward end of the outrigger rises in the air, leaving only a foot or two of its after end trailing on the surface of the water; Javan's steering paddle vibrates; his spirit fair sings with gusto; and it seems that only a moment has passed before he slackens the sheet to let the canoe nose into the sandy beach of Matauea, the leeward point of Ko.

By the time they have arrived the islet is alive with

shouting people. Scantily dressed men and women, naked boys and girls, hurry through the groves; mountains of coconuts rise magically in the cleared spaces; bush knives slash passages through the giant fern; the *ra'ui* is in full swing. As Javan walks through the islet, watching the feverishly energetic people, it seems to him incredible that only yesterday they were drowsing in their homes, seemingly too listless to rise from their mats.

Passing along the beach by the western point, on his way to the copra-makers' village at the head of the bay, Javan stops for a moment to watch old Arrowroot, who is husking coconuts on a pointed stick, the blunt end of which has been thrust in a crab hole. He breathes asthmatically and grumbles of his ills as he presses down a nut until a section of its husk is torn off. His stooped wife and two grandchildren bring the nuts to him, tied in bunches with strips from their husks. A naked boy splits the husked nuts in half by tapping them with a bush knife, then tosses them in the shallow water so the salt will prevent the meat from moulding. Finally, a girl of twelve or thirteen, with a fern-leaf girdle coquettishly around her waist, picks the split nuts from the water and arranges them in rows, upside down, on a platform that has been built over the water. There the wind and sun will dry them, and they will be safe from the thousands of coconut crabs.

Leaving the beach, Javan follows an inland path. Deep in the jungle of fern and bush he finds a mother, whose man is sick at home, struggling cheerfully over a great heap of nuts, husking them with inexpert hands. Her baby is close by, under a canopy of giant ferns. When the little one cries the mother hurries to it and offers it her full breast; but in a few moments she is back at her work. She does not complain; she is concerned only that her work be finished by night. To this atoll mother it would be shameful for the villagers to help her.

On the outer beach Toa and Miss Red-Jones, who

have slipped away from the work, turn to one another and rub their noses together, as animals do, breathing the bodily odours with short but deep inhalations. They are happy now, though knowing that in a few weeks they will be separated, perhaps for a month of two, perhaps for ever. But they believe their separation will be short, for their love is great; and even now they swear that, when the copra makers have returned to the main islet, they will walk hand in hand to Parson Sea Foam, who will make them one.

From the island jungle the path turns back to the lagoon by the copra-makers' village. The place is deserted save only for a few of the women and children, the very aged, and Deacon Bribery, who is standing by the thatched shed which serves as a church. At first the crooked-legged old fellow pays no attention to Javan. "Little rat, rat dear!" he whines, and throws a handful of pebbles on the thatching; then he stares at the roof and grins, so that his yellow teeth are exposed.

"Is it you, Javan! Life to you, Javan! Have you any tobacco? No? What a pity! The old man is hungry for tobacco. . . . The old man is to take the service on Sunday, and he is hungry for tobacco. He will preach on '*The wicked shall be turned into Hell,*' Psalms ix, 17."

"Who are the wicked, Deacon?"

"Sinners and heathens, little Javan, '*all the nations that forget God,*' even as it says in the beautiful psalm. . . . Rat dear, little rat!" and again he throws pebbles on the roof. "The church roof is full of rats, little Javan—rats with sharp white teeth, and mine are old and worn."

"What are you doing, Deacon?"

"Trading teeth with the rats, Javan dear," the old man replies, picking up another handful of pebbles. "My teeth are old and worn and falling out. I'm giving the rat coral pebbles for teeth so they will give me their white sharp ones. . . . Rat dear, little rat!" he whines, and throws the pebbles on the thatching. "Here are white

pebbles for you; give me your teeth, little rat. . . . Have lions teeth, Javan? What do lions look like? Do they meow or bark, or do they squeal like rats or crow like roosters? Do white men trade teeth with the lions? Good-bye, Javan; I'll send Miss Tears to Matauea for a little morsel of tobacco. The old man is hungry for tobacco. . . . Rat dear, little rat!" and another handful of pebbles patters on the roof of the Christian church.

Javan turns back toward Matauea. On the beach he passes Deacon Yam, bosom friend of Deacon Arrowroot. Yam has arrived too late to husk and split his nuts before night; but this is the least of his worries, for how can he, with the soles of his feet as thin as hernandia leaves, break through undergrowth and clamber over great boulders that were washed up by hurricane seas? But he has an Amazon of a wife as well as numerous progeny to work for him. Of course, Deacon's oldest daughter will be badly bitten by mosquitoes, for her skin is as soft as a moth's wing; but this does not concern him. He sends his family about his business, then picks his way along the beach, a frond basket in his hand, filling it with the hermit crabs he finds under the shore bush. When it is full he goes to his tiny dug-out, shoves it in the water and paddles to the nearest coral head, there to spend the day fishing. Perhaps he sleeps most of the time, his fish line wound round one of his toes. But fish are abundant, and when one bites the deacon is awakened. By dusk he has succeeded in catching enough for his hard-working wife and family.

On the other hand, great King-of-the-Sky scorns to have such feeble creatures as women and children do the work of a man. "Stay at home, woman, and mind the brats!" he bellows in a tone which is sure to be heard by many of the villagers, and which even Javan hears, a quarter mile away, as he passes along the trail toward Matauea. "This copra making is a man's work. I will gather my two hundred nuts, your one hundred, and fifty for each of your four brats. What is that to me? Am I not

the strongest man on Danger Island, of the Line Islands, of this, the world?"

With a sweep of his arms he demonstrates that he is aware of the spherical nature of the earth; then, turning, he strides into the groves, but not before he has ordered his wife, in an undertone: "Mind you, woman, that there are taro puddings, fish and coconut crabs, shellfish, and many drinking nuts when I return!"

To-night, when King-of-the-Sky has made good his boast by gathering, husking, splitting, and laying on the platforms five hundred nuts, he will tell the villagers about it. As his mild and understanding wife places a huge meal before him he will bellow:

"Well, feeble woman, your man has attended to the work of the whole family—but it was a small matter to him. What are twenty-five bunches of ten pairs of coconuts to him, the King-of-the-Sky—the one who stole Wail-of-Woe's woman and carried her to sea even as far as Tima Reef? But why mention it? Now, woman, if you have a small thin fish and a morsel of coconut I will be content."

He then consumes a mighty meal—such a one as five ordinary men could scarcely eat. When he has cleaned up the last scrap he grunts in full contentment, then rises to stride off to the meetings of Village Fathers where, no doubt, he will again make himself heard.

Half-way back to Matauea, where the path again turns inland, Constable Benny's two urchins have climbed a hernandia tree. They cling to tiny branches sixty feet above the ground, breaking the law as only constables' children can, hunting for the fledglings of the noddy terns and knocking them from their nests. Below them, no one else than the adorable Miss Tears has kindled a fire. She picks the fledglings from the ground, plucks out the largest of their feathers, and, spitting each one on a long stick, grills it over the fire. Once already Miss Tears has been fined ten coconuts for stealing sea birds, but she knows

she is safe now, in the company of the constable's sons.

On Javan's approach she glances toward him. An interrogation seems to express itself in her deep-brown, Mongolian eyes, and she smiles.

XIV

Conversation Under a Magnolia Bush

"Miss Tears," Javan said, "will you give me one of your noddy terns?"

"Of course, Javan," she replied, and held out a grimy bird, dripping with fat and still skewered on the end of its stick.

Javan eyed the bird dubiously; then, with diffidence, "Wouldn't it be nice," he suggested, "if we each took a bird and went to the outer beach to eat it? We could have a primitive picnic; and when we have eaten I could talk to you. I have something very important to say to you, Miss Tears."

"All right, Javan," she said, as though it were the most usual thing in the world to eat noddy terns with Javan on the outer beach. She picked up another of the spitted birds, put her hand in Javan's, in a childlike way, and, leaving unceremoniously the two boys in the tree, they walked together across the islet.

When they were close to the outer beach Miss Tears took Javan's sheath-knife, cut a coconut frond from a young tree and stripped off the leaves so only the long midrib was left. This she split three feet or so down from its outer end, then chewed the split ends till they were pliable and tied them together, forming an elongated hoop on the end of a pole. With this she pulled down two green nuts from a low tree. The leaves stripped from the midrib made a mat for her as she squatted on the ground and husked the nuts with her teeth.

The sunlight was blinding on the outer beach. It seemed to rise from the white sand in waves of heat and

light. The shallows were dry; the reef combers muttered drowsily as they washed low over the brick-red reef; only a faint breeze fanned around the eastern point of Ko. Standing beyond the outer edge of the line of magnolia bushes, Javan narrowed his eyes to slits to shut out the sunlight; then he scanned the horizon, as is the habit with atoll dwellers, on the far chance that a smudge of smoke or a sail might break the monotony of empty sea. He wondered why he had brought Miss Tears out there: he could have spoken to her as well in the groves.

"Let us sit under a magnolia bush where it is cool," Miss Tears said. "When we have eaten our terns you can tell me that important thing," and without further ado she crawled under a bush and flung herself back on the cushion of leaves. Javan followed her. He broke off a few green leaves, laid his bird on them, then with a stick pierced the soft eye of his drinking nut, and placed it beside the bird. Meanwhile, Miss Tears had started to nibble her tern. Javan watched her thoughtfully.

"How daintily you eat," he said, as he tore a leg from his bird. "Though you hold the tern in your fingers there is not a trace of grime on them. Though you bite into the flesh there is not a smudge or a film of fat on your lips. Look," he went on, holding up for inspection his soiled hands, "already they are grimy and greasy to the wrist, and I fancy, by the feel of it, that my whole face is messed up."

"Wipe your hands and face on my dress, Javan."

"Then it will be soiled."

"Oh, no, it won't."

"Aye, my dear, perhaps you are right. Perhaps it would be impossible to soil your dress: for you are one of those maidens who are always clean and tidy. You never soil your clothes in the cook-house; there are no grease spots on your muslin dress, no grime on your hands. Your finger-nails are always trimmed, and your toe-nails too, though no one has taught you to trim them. Your hair is

always combed, and braided in a single skein of silk, large and lustrous. One fancies one might waken you at four o'clock in the morning, flash an electric torch on you and discover sparkling Mongolian eyes, skin as fresh and fragrant as that of a newly-washed babe.

"Miss Tears," Javan went on as he pulled a wing from his bird and held it before his eyes to stare at it critically, "Mama is ill, and she has gone to spend a week or two with Doctor Pau, so as to have certain malicious spirits exorcised from her. . . . Fancy an evil spirit being silly enough to take possession of Mama! Now, if it were you, my dear, and I were the evil spirit. . . . Ah, Miss Tears, Mama has her good qualities and her bad. She cannot cook an egg, and she cannot resist the temptation to everlastingly prate about babies and things, but, on the other hand. . . . Curse of Satan! I am becoming as discursive as old Mama. . . . What was I saying, Miss Tears?"

"That Mama has gone to Doctor Pau," Miss Tears replied, with a smile, as she lay back on the cushion of leaves and nibbled the last shred of flesh from her bird.

"Aye, my dear . . . and perhaps I could keep my mind on my subject better than Mama keeps her mind on hers, if only you would sit upright. When you are flung back on the leaves it is impossible for me to have the haziest notion as to what I am talking about."

Miss Tears wrinkled her brow in genuine perplexity; then, with a shrug worthy of Mama herself, she sat upright, picked up her drinking nut, and throwing back her head sucked the water from its eye.

Javan sighed, collected his thoughts, and said: "I am without a cook, Miss Tears. I wonder if you will come to Matauea and be my cook until Mama returns? You should harmonise with Matauea."

Miss Tears glanced at Javan with a twinkle in her eyes. "Did you have to bring me out here under a magnolia bush to tell me *that?*" she asked.

"No; I thought it would be nice to sit with you on the outer beach."

"Then why didn't you say so?"

"Well, you see, Miss Tears, it would sound foolish to say that, and so, having no better excuse, I used the one I had."

"I don't think it would sound foolish," Miss Tears murmured, glancing into Javan's eyes. "I will sit with you on the outer beach any time you like," and with that she broke her empty drinking nut on the trunk of the bush and started to eat the jelly-like meat.

"What did you think I wanted to talk to you about?" Javan asked.

"About love, of course."

"Aye, perhaps, some day. . . ." He broke off, lay back on the leaves, and picking up his nut started to suck the water from it. Miss Tears stared at him for a little space, shrugged her shoulders, and then lay back again, this time to rest her head on Javan's arm. They were quiet for a few moments; then Miss Tears asked, in all the worldly-wise innocence of a Danger Island maiden:

"Why do white women have babies, Javan?"

"Because they want them, I suppose—or because they can't help it."

"That's not what I mean. How do they make them?"

"The same way the Danger Island people make theirs."

"Oh, no; you are wrong."

"How am I wrong?"

"You wouldn't tell me," she said musingly, "that the Reverend Johns and his wife made all their babies the same way the Danger Island people make theirs?"

"Even so, my dear."

"Then why does the Reverend Johns always talk about love being sinful?"

"He means love between unmarried people . . . on the outer beach . . . in the moonlight . . . under a magnolia bush."

"Is that different from love between married people?"

"Yes, my dear, for Jehovah has not set his hand and seal to it."

"Oh!"

"Do you understand now?"

"No."

"Neither do I. . . . Will you give me a kiss, Miss Tears?"

"Of course. . . . I knew you didn't come out here just to ask me to cook for you. . . . Let's talk about babies, Javan. You love babies, and so do I."

"You know, Miss Tears, in some ways you remind me of Mama. When you are old you will gossip about love and babies and such things, just as Mama does."

"Why shouldn't I?" Miss Tears asked. She rolled on her right side so she faced Javan, and she said, a little wistfully: "Suppose we got married, Javan, and had lots of babies; then, when we are old, and the babies had grown up, I could tell you about their love-making on the outer beach."

"Miss Tears! My children make love on the outer beach!"

"Of course—wouldn't that be nice?"

Javan was thoughtful for a long time. It occurred to him that love-making on the outer beach, under a magnolia bush, with Miss Tears, would be only beautiful; and if such love-making would be beautiful for him why should it not be beautiful for his children? "Alas, we grown-ups!" he thought. "We are governed by sentiment the same as children. We cannot understand, except in moments of cold reason, that that which is beautiful for us may also be beautiful for our children. It is no more than a peccadillo for us to drink home-brew with old William—but it is a great evil for our children to drink. It is wholly delightful for us to make love on the outer beach—but the same thing shows carnal weakness in our children!" Javan drained his coconut, pressed the shell between

his hands to break it open, then scooped out with his thumb a slab of the meat and ate it. His eyes seemingly lost in the depths of Miss Tears's eyes, he said, abstractedly:

"Yes; it would be nice for our children to make love in a wholesome and natural way on the outer beach. Love on the outer beach is more beautiful than love in an automobile, or a parlour, or in an alley, or on a park bench—and to me anything that is beautiful is good. But we'll never grow old together, Miss Tears, and we'll never have lots of babies."

"Why not?"

Javan did not reply at once. He pointed through an opening in the magnolia leaves to where, half-way between them and the shallows, Bones shambled along the beach.

Miss Tears raised her head to glance at Bones. A little shudder seemed to pass through her. She edged close to Javan and buried her head in his shoulder. A few moments later she was crying.

"Why are you crying, Miss Tears? It is only Bones. If The Name, or King-of-the-Sky, or Deacon Bribery passed you wouldn't cry. If The Bird, or George, or Toa passed you wouldn't cry."

"I don't know why I cry," Miss Tears said, wiping her eyes on the hem of her dress. "I am afraid and so I cry, that is all."

"You aren't afraid to lie under a magnolia bush with me. Why are you afraid of Bones?"

"Because he is such a terrible man."

"Why is he terrible?"

"I don't know. He is just terrible."

"Aye, he *is* terrible. One wise man might stroke his hoary beard and tell you it is because of something or other; another wise man might eye you over the rim of his spectacles and tell you it is because of something else; and I tell you . . . what do I tell you? God knows—except that I hope you will always shudder and cry when he

passes . . . Miss Tears, after they have made you into a woman who will your lover be?"

"Why don't you be my lover, Javan?"

"No, if I were your lover I should marry you."

"Why?"

"Oh, it's a sort of a bad habit we foreigners have got into."

"Wouldn't you like to marry me?"

"Yes, but the girl I must marry must not experiment first with all the Danger Island youths. I admit that I am being inconsistent. Only Danger Island maidens are consistent, and this is because they follow frankly their sentiments without reasoning about them or trying to make them conform to logic. I am being inconsistent because my acts are governed by sentiment more than by reason, but nevertheless I try to find logical explanations for them. My education formed my mind in such a way that promiscuity is distasteful to me—that is, when it is practised by the girl I intend to marry. I know that promiscuity can be healthful and delightful. I know that you would not be harmed—or 'defiled,' as my charming countrymen say—by wild nights with the young unmarried. But I cannot *feel* this. I should be miserable if, loving you, I learned that you were experimenting with all the boys. Alas! we can write books of logic in the austere seclusion of our studies, but on the outer beach it is different. Thank God it is different! . . . Do you understand me, Miss Tears?"

"Yes, Javan; you don't want me to go with the young unmarried to the outer beach after they have made me into a woman. I won't go, Javan; I'll be a virgin like the girl in the Bible. What was her name?"

"Mary."

"No; some other girl. Mary couldn't have been a virgin, because she had a baby. I know, for we had a May Day mummery about it and my sister played the part of Mary. That was the mummery Mrs. Johns didn't like. . . .

Good-bye, Javan," and here Miss Tears started to crawl out from under the magnolia bush. "I'll be your cook till Mama comes back—even if you won't marry me. I'll be at Matauea with the dawn."

XV

Matauea in the Sunlight

The dawn, Javan Moonlight claims, is a sorry affair when observed from his cook-house on the main islet; but from his house on Matauea Point it assumes qualities of spiritual significance.

It is probable that Mr. Moonlight spends more than half his time on Matauea, solely to enjoy each morning the dawn. To a normal person such conduct is absurd. Fancy spending the greater part of one's life on an uninhabited islet, without even a radio or a Sunday paper, and this simply to watch the sun rise! It seems more than eccentric. However, life in the trading station is monotonous, and it refreshes Javan's spiritual self to spend long months on his idolised point.

When he sails from the trading station to Matauea the change is as complete as though he had crossed thousands of miles of sea to another hemisphere. He believes that one must study the subtler sensory reactions to understand this change; for at Matauea there is the same sand and coral gravel, the same coconut trees leaning eastward, as though they, too, were awaiting the dawn; there is the same crystal-clear lagoon with its sunken mountain ranges and its forests of antler coral, the same sky with its fluffy little clouds of cotton wool. Aye; but at Matauea there are no village smells or village noises, no spontaneous screams or laughter, no smoke from cooking fires nor smell of grilling fish, no movement save only the movement of birds and clouds, the little lagoon waves marching to the beach, the stirring of coconut fronds.

There are Mama and William, of course, and once in a great while a fisherman from the copra-makers' village

a mile across the bay, but they seem only to accentuate the loneliness of the place. Moreover, William is out in his canoe most of the day, smoking, sleeping, even fishing. Mama is a huddled object in a ragged dress and a grass skirt, always in the cook-house, as much a part of the place as is the thatched roof over her head.

But perhaps the geography of Matauea is principally responsible for the sense of complete change. On the lee side of a mile-wide horseshoe bay, the point is no more than a hundred yards across, clear of vegetation except for a few coconut trees, and joined to the main body of the islet by a neck of land overgrown with atoll jungle. Standing on the extreme end of the point, Javan can easily fancy himself becalmed at sea. Four miles to the north, the main islet is a thick black line raised one half the sun's diameter above the horizon. To the west, Frigate Bird Islet stands higher but narrower. All the rest is lagoon, and reef, and open sea. Open sea! How well Javan knows that he is isolated in the midst of the loneliest of oceans, on a tiny bank of sand scarcely six feet high—a bank of sand so insignificant that, when gales thunder down from the equator, the combers pile over the roof and wash across the shallows literally to submerge the entire point. On this same Matauea, only a few years ago, he spent a night in a coconut tree while the wind screamed, the reef roared like a Niagara, the seas flooded the land below him.

But such storms are rare. For years on end Javan looks out from Matauea to see the reef to windward rising and subsiding in azure-tinted foam, the reef to leeward stippling fitfully the otherwise united expanse of lagoon and sea.

The geography of Matauea gives the illusion of being at sea, but inland the life is that of an uninhabited island, as in fact it is, eight months of the year. Here is a self-contained world of creeping and flying things. The sun rises over colonies of boobies and noddy terns, gawky

man-o'-war hawks and graceful tropic birds; the wind blows, the rain falls, the moon waxes and wanes, the stars shine with the same soft light as on places inhabited by men. On Matauea the gifts of Nature are showered prodigally on the land. Sometimes one feels that they are wasted, but later on realises that the creeping and flying things are as important in the scheme of things as is man himself.

Inland, countless coconut crabs burrow among the fallen nuts and fronds. They are like gigantic hermit crabs that have outgrown their shells: lobsters inveigled ashore by the promise of security and high living. Their protruding eyes glow redly at night; their great claws are powerful enough to husk and break a coconut, to tear a sea bird to shreds. And there are the fat little mice the Mangaians love to grill over pandanus-nut coals. Their greedy eyes glint and their whiskers twitch as they nibble the oily meat left by the crabs. Gold-streaked lizards, sleek as eels, scurry over the islet, feeding on beetles and butterflies. They lay their eggs in the forks of the trees. When one hatches, the little lizard bursts from his shell, leaps forward, glances this way and that, then darts off in search of a meal. This little creature requires no mother's training. The hermit crabs laboriously drag their shells along the sand, their eyes peeled for some legendary danger. Save for an occasional curlew, a fisherman in search of bait, they have scarcely an enemy, yet at the least untoward trembling of a leaf they will clap into their shells and barricade their doors effectively with tightly-folded claws. Perhaps their dim consciousness is still troubled by an inherited memory of the days when they inhabited the reef, when octopuses and parrot fish crushed their shells and ate them.

Behind Matauea, immaculate ghost terns flutter in the pandanus thickets. Their ridiculous fuzzy fledglings perch on the angular limbs with mouths agape and eyes strangely savage for such gentle creatures. Black terns circle low

over the islet, screaming in a note that suggests both petulance and loneliness. At night they come from the sea in thousands, to roost in the coconut and pandanus trees, when the place becomes a bedlam of throaty calls until the last one has tucked his head under his wing. Javan loves to listen to them on a moonlight night; he claims that it makes him believe he is living in some grotesque fairyland illusioned out of an opium dream. Higher in the air are the tropic birds, with long, slim tail feathers scarlet-red against the sky, white breasts tinged with the blue reflection of the lagoon. And higher still, black flaws in the crystal sky, the frigate birds soar without a tremor of their wings, seemingly as immobile as the stars.

In the lagoon is incredible life. An old mama-turtle bobs up her head to breathe, stares phlegmatically at the lagoon beach, and decides, mayhap, on the best place in the magnolia bush to lay her eggs. Perhaps she feels some vague misgivings about the hut on the end of the point, remembering dimly a time, decades past, when there had been a similar hut on a beach where she had laid her eggs, and when she had waddled into the lagoon barely in time to save her carapace shell. A yellow-fin shark cruises about, frightening the South Sea demoiselles into their sprays of antler coral, or at times thrashes the water as he charges into a school of silver mullet. Great conger eels slither in and about the coral heads; and sometimes they come ashore, twenty feet up the beach, to stalk the sandpipers. Perhaps some day, ages hence, one will at last decide that shore life is more satisfactory than that of the lagoon, and with a valedictory flip of his tail will squirm into the coconut groves, there to remain. Tridacnae and mother-of-pearl bivalves gape deep down in the crevices, waiting, as they have been doing these millions of years, for inexperienced protozoa to drift into their mouths. Octopuses stare coldly and fixedly from the submarine caverns; countless grotesquely-shaped fish—butterfly fish, and surgeon fish,

and balloon fish, and pipe fish—fin through the water in a kaleidoscope of colour.

During the long periods of tranquil weather the trade wind flows steadily across the point untainted by the smells of human habitations. For here the wind has the subtle odour, or odourlessness, of the sea, a quality Javan recognises, but cannot name, though sometimes, when combers beat heavily along the reef, spray rides for miles on the wind to convey a taste that is more definite than its smell.

And to Javan Moonlight, filling his lungs with the clean, salty air, there comes at times the illusion of complete solitude on an exclusive, pristine world of his own. But soon the illusion vanishes, and he fancies, conversely, that he is in close touch with the immeasurably distant world. The wind is blowing from that world; the long Pacific undulations are flowing from thence, breaking across the windward reef, dividing in ripples to cross the lagoon, then gradually gathering together to form new undulations that will pile over other reefs to leeward.

And sometimes, when walking along the outer beach of a morning, Javan will find a turtle track leading from the shallows to the shore bush, and he will know that a visitor from distant oceans has crawled ashore to lay her eggs. Or there will be a piece of driftwood which he will study for hours, and which he will decide was a rough tree-rail, the hatch coaming of a wrecked ship, or simply a plank from the deck cargo of a lumber vessel. Once he found a corked bottle enclosing a paper stating that the oil tanker *Andromeda* was in a certain latitude and longitude on a certain day, and requesting that the finder of the message send it to the United States Hydrographic Office, for it would be of value in the study of oceanic currents. The oil tanker *Andromeda!* The United States Hydrographic Office! As far as Javan's eyes could reach was empty ocean, a bank of sand, coconut trees, and screaming sea birds; yet somewhere beyond this solitude men sent

oil tankers to fabulous ports, men studied the currents of the last sequestered sea!

Throughout the year, at Matauea, great concourses of fish, travelling from one shore of the Pacific to another, will cross the reef to rest in the lagoon for a few days. The shallow water will be alive with them; and as Javan watches them rise to flash their silver bellies in the sunlight, he will think of the leagues of sea they have crossed, their panic flights when albacore have charged into them or flocks of boobies have appeared overhead. After they have gone he will stare out to sea, and by visualising them far off somewhere in the Pacific, swimming steadily, silently, unseen, for some destination which even they know of by blind instinct only, he will realise that there are other lands than Danger Island, other seas than the one that is bounded by his horizon.

It is the same with the curlews. During the months of the northern summer there are few of these birds on the islet; but in October and November they appear, flying across the point, piping their characteristic "Kee-u-ee! Kee-u-ee!"—the same call they had made a few weeks before, along the Arctic Circle! Aye, at Matauea, Javan knows by certain tokens that there are other lands—even an Arctic, a coast of South America.

And at long separated intervals, once in twelve months or eighteen months, from Matauea he will see a smudge of smoke, or even a steamer hull down on the horizon. Such a sight leaves him with mingled awe and discouragement. The vandal world is still there, covetous, eager to encroach on the last retreats of Solitude; and now, at sea, personified in a cloud of smoke, a ship, like a vulture soaring over the body of a dying man, like the scout of a barbarian army, the watchman of civilisation passes on his rounds, stares fixedly at Javan for a brief space, then moves on—but with a final, an eloquent puff of smoke, which tells, alas! that no man can escape.

XVI

Matauea Under the Stars

To Javan Moonlight, the night at Matauea surpasses the day. Across the shallows the seas mutter on the outer reef; behind him the wind rings a sustained tintinnabulation in the palm fronds. A dove coos from the black inland jungle; there is the clinking of coral gravel as the hermit crabs promenade by the water's edge; the clap of little waves; the dissonant clamour of birds in the pandanus thickets—sounds heard but not recognised in the sunlight. The new moon sinks behind a wall of clouds; the lagoon blackens; the contours of the great constellations emerge, brighten, and are perfected. Then fires flash from the copra-makers' village across the bay, reminding Javan of the lights of a port seen from an open roadstead; and presently, like answering signal fires, from four miles across the lagoon flare the fires of Central Village, or, to westward, a few lights glow in the hernandia groves of Frigate Bird Islet. And the lights of the sky are so sharply defined that Javan has fancied he could see the moons of Jupiter, even isolate the stars in the Milky Way.

On calm nights, reverberating across the water with bell-like clearness, the voices of the copra-makers seem to fill the air. It is as though they were close at hand, ghostly voices in the darkness of Matauea: children laughing, the chant of the himene singers, old men droning their ancient epics; or again, it may be the plash of a naked body against the water or shark-skin drums beating out a dance rhythm. And sometimes, late at night, sounding so clear that Javan all but believes the voices have come from his own cook-house, he will hear a woman scolding

her husband: "Now there are no fish for supper, lazy-bones!" and the man's reply: "Sleep, woman, you think only of your food." One night, as he lay late with a volume of Marcel Proust, a girl's voice came in a startled scream; then a youth, sharply: "Why do you sleep, little one? All the young unmarried are dancing on the outer beach!" And a moment later Javan fancied he could hear the crackling of dry twigs, the clink of coral gravel, as bare feet hurried across the islet.

In the day-time Javan sleeps, yarns with Mama and William, wanders through the islet, or fishes with a set line from the beach, ten yards from his house. At night he loses himself in the sophisticated world of the Faubourg St. Germain. "Marcel Proust is the only author I can read at Matauea," he states. "This may be because of the sharp contrast between the artificial society of *A la Recherche du Temps perdu* and the fundamental realities of Matauea; or mayhap it is because the music of his prose epitomises the classic quality of the life about me, as the 'little phrase' out of Venteuil's sonata epitomises Swann's love for Odette de Crécy. I am certain that I enjoy Marcel Proust at Matauea not because of what he has to tell me, but because of the way he tells it. I am amused by his characterisation of Robert Saint-Loup, Françoise, Céleste Albaret, Legrandin, Mme. Verdurin, but also I am nauseated by an overdose of Monsieur Charlus, Léa, Morel, Albertine. I am interested in his analyses, but I have read them so many times that I anticipate them after the first few words—then I have the sentence to enjoy solely for its perfection in colour, harmony, technique. These sentences fascinate me. For instance: 'And I watched her, as she returned from some walk along a road where she had known that he would not appear, drawing from her submissive fingers long gloves of a precious, useless charm.' How ingeniously these words describe the little woman who has been deserted by her lover—the little woman whose fingers are as submissive as her heart, whose gloves are of a precious

charm, but useless, for she will not meet her lover along the path she follows!

"I have never been able to read Marcel Proust except at Matauea. When in America, I advised my Uncle Urban to read him. He did his best; he appreciated his literary values, but he could not read a hundred pages. Nor could I—in America. A work such as this should be taken to an uninhabited island, and there one should give his entire attention to it. One should live in the book so completely that when, after a few hours' reading, one lays it down to fill one's pipe or rest one's eyes, the sudden cognisance of one's physical surroundings, the sound of wind and sea, the smell of vegetation, come as a shock. And, more than anything else, one should read the work slowly, pronouncing each word, studying each sentence, re-reading parts of peculiar charm until one delights in the refinements of style, the happy use of a single vivid adjective, or of a colon used in a place where a dash might have sufficed with another author. With such reading, six or eight hours a night, a hundred pages are ample; and if those hundred pages are of exceptional charm, one can read them over and over again, night after night, until their modulations create in one's mind a song.

"It is of great importance to avoid reading for the story's sake. Nothing could be cruder. What *is* a story, anyway, but literary legerdemain to gain the attention of simple minds? Travelling salesmen tell excellent stories, so do savages. One should read the enjoyment of the subtle values of style; one should listen to the rhythm of a sentence, savour the epicurean choice of a delectable word. To do this one must not have an unpalatable source of street-car noises, automobile horns, and yelling newsboys.

"Marcel Proust writes with cultured leisure. When he wishes us to dine with Mme. de Guermantes we know that there will be no lunch-counter affair where one snatches a sandwich and runs—the kind of thing that is implied in

the sub-caption: 'Reading time, 4 minutes, 32 seconds.' We shall not be ill with indigestion because we have had no time to masticate properly. Nay; we shall dine for nearly two hundred pages, with refined leisure, much conversation, and many anecdotes; we shall interrupt the meal at midnight, just after the *financière* chicken, to resume it to-morrow; and possibly a week will pass before we pull on our snowboots and climb in our carriage to call on Monsieur de Charlus.

"*A la Recherche du Temps perdu* was written particularly for Matauea Point," Javan continues. "It was not meant for the subway, the hotel bedroom, the summer resort, or the tourist steamer. I am not able to read this work even on the main islet. It demands that I shall live so completely in its pages that even Matauea shall become indistinct and then vanish. If I fall to sleep over its pages, and later am awakened by the croaking of sea birds, I become aware only vaguely of the change, for, both when sleeping and awake, its characters pass before my eyes, while within my mind moves the rhythmic but now unintelligible prose of Marcel Proust. And often enough, staring in the gloom of the coconut groves, I see living figures passing to and fro; I hear voices from the memory of things past. There is Robert Saint-Loup, dashing toward the barracks, 'moving like a whirlwind, his eyeglass spinning in the air before him . . . proceeded by his eyeglass, which fluttered in every direction.' Françoise wrings the neck of a fowl, the 'filthy creature,' and talks with 'her young footman' about her daughter and the 'poor soldiers.' Albertine moves swiftly through the shadows, toward the outer beach, with its 'seascape and frieze of girls,' Rosamonds, Gisèles, Andrées, 'juvenile mistresses of professional bicylists.' The 'smart, depraved young women' who dream of 'artificial charms and a refinement of sensual bliss' stare wistfully after Albertine, and perhaps they wonder if the young unmarried on the outer beach have anything new to offer. And there is Céleste Albaret, 'softer and more

languishing' than Marie Gineste, 'spread out like a lake, but with terrible boiling rages in which her fury suggested the peril of spates and gales that sweep everything before them.' And finally, to one side, is Basin's Oriane, Mme. de Guermantes herself, with a ray of tropic moonlight playing on the 'hips and haws' in her hair. She wishes to be seen, and hence her position in a moonlit glade, but she does not wish to be spoken to, for 'Great and glorious before the days of Charlemagne, the Guermantes had the right of life and death over their vassals; the Duchesse de Guermantes descends from Geneviève de Brabant. She does not know, nor would she consent to know, any of the people who are here to-day,' on Matauea Point, on the islet of Ko."

Sometimes, after a month or two with Marcel Proust, Javan confuses his waking and his dreaming life: one seems to merge in the other, until he is unable to distinguish between them. But he is certain that he was awake on the night he met Marcel Proust, for how in his sleep could his shoes and trousers have been soaked in the puddles of the outer reef? He recalls, however, that it was the night before the beginning of the equinoctial storm of that year; so the barometer was low, and Javan's mind was distraught, as it always is by a drop in the atmospheric pressure.

It was low tide, with the waning moon nearly overhead and the dawn close at hand. Javan was walking slowly along the reef toward the main islet, which he could make out dimly a mile ahead, while Ko Islet was lost in a wall of jet-black clouds behind him. To his right, beyond the faintly-gleaming surf, the sea stretched dull-grey and brooding, to blacken gradually until it had dissolved itself in the horizon clouds. To his left, the lagoon sparkled, but dully, like old gems.

"It is the twentieth night of the moon," Javan muttered, as he stumbled along the furrowed reef and waded through ankle-deep pools. "This is the night when the spirits rise from their graves."

A flock of black terns passed over his head; a curlew piped in a note of unearthly loneliness; the reef muttered and sobbed deep down in the crevices; and then, suddenly, from the misty darkness ahead, Javan heard footsteps plashing in the pools, a cynical laugh, a voice intoning:

"The little train had not yet arrived, but one could see, lazy and slow, the plume of smoke that it had left in its wake, which, confined now to its own power of locomotion as an almost stationary cloud, was slowly mounting the green slopes of the cliff of Criquetot."

Javan stopped dead, stiff with terror. The cynical laugh came again—for perhaps Marcel Proust was recalling the place names on the Transatlantic, or the white beards at the Princess de Guermantes' reception, or the array of monocles at Mme. de Saint-Euverte's musicale.

Then Javan saw him emerge from the darkness. He was muffled to his ears in a greatcoat; there was a woollen scarf wrapped round his head and neck, heavy overshoes on his feet, fur gloves on his hands, and in one of those hands a Gladstone bag! Javan could scarcely see his sallow bloodless face, but his eyes seemed to glow, deep-sunk and eloquent of pain.

He stared fixedly at Javan, but did not stop. Then, all at once, Javan heard himself screaming: "Are you going to catch a train?" and then he, too, laughed, in a wild hysterical burst, and clapped his hands against his head, as though to keep it from bursting.

"A train?" Marcel Proust muttered in a hollow tone. "The train itself appeared conscious of the part that had been devolved upon it, had contracted a sort of human kindliness; patient, of a docile nature, it waited as long as they pleased for the stragglers, and even after it had started would stop to pick up those who signalled it; they would run after it panting, in which they resembled itself, but differed from it in that they were running to overtake it at full speed whereas it employed only a wise slowness."

The apparition had passed Javan by now, but still the

plash of overshoes came distinctly through the gloomy night air, and finally, when the thing was no more than a wraith of mist fast merging in the wall of storm clouds, Javan heard its voice again, as though from a great distance, speaking slowly, sadly: "It was already night when I exchanged the warmth of the hotel for the railway carriage into which I climbed with Albertine, in which a glimmer of lamp-light on the window showed, at certain halts of the panting little train, that we had arrived at a station. So that there should be no risk of Cottard's missing us, and not having heard the name of the station, I opened the door, but what burst headlong into the carriage was not any one of the faithful, but the wind, the rain, the cold. In the darkness I could make out fields, I could hear the sea, we were in the open country."

At that Javan screamed and rushed forward. He remembers only that the sky seemed black with croaking terns, that now the reef roared like a wild animal, the wind moaned across the dry coral.

XVII

Javan Moonlight Invites His Soul

As the night at Matauea surpasses the day, so does the dawn surpass the night.

"Give me your impressions of the dawn?" Javan Moonlight was once asked.

He replied by pointing to one of the trading station shelves where lay a diary as massive as an unabridged dictionary, and, "Read," he said.

"What part?"

"Any part—I write only about the dawn."

On opening the diary one found that Mr. Moonlight had not exaggerated. It was all about the dawn, and, what is more, the dawn at Matauea.

"Even though I have lingered late in the night with a volume of Marcel Proust," one read, "I am always well awake before the first smoky light dims the stars above the eastern point of Ko. Sometimes I am wakened by the sound of William breaking kindling across his horny knee, or by the dull thunder of distant combers, augmented in the house until even the backwash spilling over the outer slope of the reef comes so distinctly that I dream mayhap of my grandfather, dead these twenty years, shovelling coal into the furnace of our home in Cleveland; and I am wakened suddenly by a pang of sorrow—the same pang which in waking life was long since deadened by time. Or I may be wakened by the cawing of noddy terns passing out to sea, or by dream symbols which, revolving with the hours, apprise me by some impercipient means that the morning star has risen, the dawn is at hand. At other times I may be wakened by an odour such as that of coconut spathes burning under the tea-kettle; or by both sound

and smell, as when William grinds the breakfast coffee, seemingly for hours on end, and the churning sound, confused with, though somehow related to the aroma of freshly roasted coffee, drifts into the sleeping house to suggest to my dreaming mind a Papeete Chinaman's shop, the clamour of the market-place, the importance of jumping from my mat and bicycling to town lest I be too late to buy a string of fish. And then, so as to prolong by a few moments my sleep, I will fancy myself bicycling through the grey streets of a mythic town at dawn—bicycling on and on, by conscious and almost frantic effort elongating the blocks, forcing outward to some distant place the market so that I shall not soon reach it, buy my fish, and of necessity awake. Or it may be the sense of touch that wakens me: the steady flow of the trade wind passing through the open sides of the house, ruffling slightly my quilt, blowing on my face with sea-fragrant puffs; or the cool renitency of my sleeping-mat, which in profound sleep seems to have slipped away from under me, to leave me suspended in a tenuous, non-gravitational space, but now by slow degrees becomes a palpable surface; then a pillow is conjured from nowhere to under my head, a quilt floats down from the shadows of the rafters to press lightly my silk pyjamas against my skin. Still I do not waken. Dream figures form in symbols of these somatic impressions—symbols intended to explain them so logically that my dreaming mind will not demand a further explanation, and in so doing awaken me. I am miles above the earth in Hans Pfaall's balloon; I am Hans Pfaall himself, lying in the hard wickerwork basket, my head pillowed on my arm, the cat, gigantic but light as a feather, stretched on top of me. And now my Aunt Adelina dances into my presence with a steaming cup of coffee, while my Uncle Urban, suspended against the background of balloon, sandpapers the dining-room table.

"But I know even in my sleep that the dawn is at hand. A troubling sensation passes over me, which I interpret in

a short and vivid dream symbol of loss caused by delay—perhaps as the loss of lemonade caused by too late an arrival at the family reunion. And now gradually, as sounds, smells, feeling intensity, I become aware of a triangle of misty blue, in the exact centre of which a point of light shines steadfastly. About it in the deep shadows (or mayhap in the shadows of my mind, for in the hypnagogic state, position in space is a relative conception) three wise men plod toward Bethlehem, while merging but not confused with them a Sunday school teacher speaks silently to a row of little toddlers with curly golden hair. There is nothing fantastic about these groups, nor is it fantastic that the point of light moves slowly—so slowly that I know it has moved only by recalling that it was lower down when first I saw it. Then it has disappeared with the suddenness of an electric light switched off; but almost at the same instant the horn of a yellow waning moon juts above the base of the triangle, its glow effacing the Three Wise Men and the Sunday school class. Presently the whole moon is visible, but only for a moment, for now its upper horn is swallowed by the triangle's apex.

"I know now that I am awake, that I am lying on my left side, staring at the gable end of the house where the thatching has been laid only to within a foot or so of the ridge-pole, leaving a triangular open space. The moon is gone and no star has taken her place, but the deep-blue sky is of significant though nameless beauty, as are all things to the awakening conscious mind."

Javan's sleeping house at Matauea is a thatched roof supported by eight cordia posts. The eaves are long, extending from the roof to within 3 feet of the ground. There are no walls, but frond mats are tied below the eaves when the weather is stormy; and there is no floor, but in place of one three inches of fine coral gravel covered by pandanus-leaf mats, eight and ten deep. Lying on these mats in the very early morning, with thoughts, visions, physical sensations passing through him slowly, as though they had been

carried by the trade wind in through the east side of the house and out through the west, Javan turns his eyes to stare into the shadows of the roof "where now"—returning to his diary—"the polished pandanus-log rafters gleam dimly, like a varnished mast seen by a helmsman on a starlit night." Or he glances toward the great cordia posts. "They are black rigid watchmen to the south—Nubian sentinels guarding the jungle, for beyond them is unbelievable darkness where coconut trees, pandanus, and magnolia bushes pile up in an impenetrable wall. Presently a red glow is cast against this darkness. It moves fitfully, expands, contracts, increases in intensity, and subsides. William has kindled the fire under the tea-kettle; but the fire itself is invisible, for I have placed the packing-case I use for a table where it will block off the glare.

"To my right the coral gravel is dulled by undefined shadows; but between the boles of the coconut trees, seemingly a vast distance away, I can see upright oblong pictures of the shallows, the black western sky, Frigate Bird Islet resting on the invisible horizon like a loaf of bread that has toppled over the rim of its pan. To eastward, close to Matauea, the horse-shoe bay is alive with ripples; but it is smooth as porcelain farther away, in the lee of the eastern point. The point itself, black as a monk's cowl, is serrated where the taller coconut trees jut into the sky; and above the point a long, narrow expanse of sky, cut off above by the eaves of the house, is touched with the smoky signal fires of dawn.

"I know it will be a Victorian water-colour this morning. There will be strata of Nile green where those long mare's-tails break through the dumpling-like clouds. There will be other strata of azure blue, and of orchid, and pearl grey, and old ivory; and there will be dashes of the gold that suggests classic gods rather than earthly wealth. It will not be one of those lurid, spectacular, barbarous, ostentatious dawns which so many people admire.

"Again I stare upward. The rafters are more clearly

defined; the straight lines of thatching have been laid anew; the ridge-pole has returned from its wanderings in the shadows to support for another day the roof; the triangular opening at the gable end of the house seems by contrast with its enclosing umbra brighter than the oblong of sky beneath the eaves. And now the familiar attendants of my house return so silently, so unobtrusively, that I am fair startled to find them about me: my table, by the south-west corner post, its legs, as skinny as those of a Cruikshank character, severing, like the boles of the coconut trees, the distant view of shallows and western sky. And there, on one of the tie-beams, a carton of matches and a bar of soap. They stare back at me brazenly as do the books on my table, my steamer chair, the tin of kerosene, and the mirror. I fancy they are daring me to upbraid them with sneaking from the house during the hours of darkness. Then suddenly all these familiar shapes vanish from my consciousness, for there is a crunching of gravel under bare feet, and a few seconds later a sylphine figure emerges from the gloom, seems to float past the sleeping house, is outlined for an instant against the reflected firelight, and finally resolves into a huddled figure beside the tea-kettle.

"No; it is not Mama. Even such a surmise is an aspersion on the exquisite Miss Tears, Mama is ill and has gone to stay for a few days with Witch Doctor Pau; so Miss Tears has relieved her, temporarily I hope, for Mama's sake though not for my own. I have chosen Miss Tears because I have felt that she would harmonise with the Greek quality of Matauea.

"On this particular morning I rose as soon as Miss Tears had passed. Carrying a towel with me to the well, I scooped up a bucketful of water and, my pyjamas flung aside, upturned it over my head. Gasping, my flesh tingling, I rubbed down with the towel, slipped on my pyjamas, and moved to the lagoon beach where I lay on the sand to stare abstractedly into the sky.

"Symbols, like the sand dots of the geomancer, like

the cryptography of the Persian magi: signs in the sky, mystic writings which ancient man understood only too well, but which modern man confuses with data about light years, relative motion in space, and such rhymeless knowledge—symbols of the sky which now I stared at with a feeling of awe. These symbols were written long before the Cumaean sibyl foretold Aeneas's fate, ages before Tyre, Babylon, Sumer; they were written in the sky before the ground apes discovered their minds—written so the first sub-man could observe them, and wonder, and gradually understand that they governed the seasons, the migration of game, birth, death, and mating. Ages ago aboriginal man looked into the sky in the early morning hours, saw the Pleiades low to eastward, and felt, if not reasoned, that the season of fair weather and abundant food was at hand. Countless generations of palaeolithic man exclaimed, in strange and confused mutterings, that the Hyades was well above the horizon at dawn, that therefore the cold season was past and the reindeer would be moving to the north. And neolithic man stared at the same sickle of moon that I now stared at from Matauea, and wondered of what portent was her close proximity to Venus, the Pleiades, and the Hyades. These sky symbols could not come together by chance. Did not the matutinal rising of the Pleiades signify that the shellfish would be fat and the wild ducks would be flying northward? Did not the waning moon announce the end of the month's hunting? Was not Venus a sure augury of prosperity? Thus ancient man may have speculated, his eyes fixed intently on the stars; and thus may have been codified certain laws which even to-day modern man believes, and calls astrology. But the significant thing is that man, for hundreds of thousands of years, stared at these images, and pondered them, thereby impressing them on the collective mind of the race so that never can they be obliterated. And now I, on the beach of Matauea, my mind receptive, stared into the sky to wonder vaguely why the moon, the Pleiades, and Venus, forming

an uneven triangle, should waken in me a feeling of devotion mingled with awe.

" 'Javan!' a mellow voice called from the cook-house. I rose with a sigh of delectation. How gratifying to have in the cook-house a charming maiden who calls simply, 'Javan!' tacitly testifying her awareness of my capacity to surmise the rest of the sentence; subtly flattering me, as will a man who says to his acquaintance, 'Gas,' while meaning 'The car has stopped because the petrol is exhausted,' but allowing his friend the pretty compliment of surmising the sentence for himself. Mama understands no such *finesse*. Often she will call: 'Javan! Your coffee is ready and it is getting cold!' or, 'Hurry up, Javan! I have the egg ready to drop in the frying-pan the moment you enter the cook-house!' Such prolixity is annoying in the silence of the dawn, the time when the spirit is exalted on a gossamer so frail, so delicate, that one wordy capful of wind will rend it and send the sublimated spirit toppling to the prosaic earth. But Miss Tears, unconsciously alive to the fine shadings of spiritual experience, calls simply, 'Javan!' modulating her voice betimes till it rings in harmony with the long strata of Nile green that now, above the eastern point, is interlined with parallel stratas of gold."

The cook-house at Matauea is a thatched roof supported by six cordia posts. Under the roof is an open fireplace, a food safe, a packing-case, and a kerosene-case with a back nailed to it—these last two being Javan's table and chair. From his chair, sitting with his left side to the table, his coffee-bowl at his elbow, he can see, by looking straight ahead, the main islet four miles away. It is ashen in the early morning light, scarcely more than visible against the northern horizon clouds, while the reef, stretching from the main islet to disappear behind the sleeping house, is visible only as a grey low-hanging mist broken on its sea marge by flashes of spray. The sleeping house is at an angle for forty-five degrees from Javan's line of vision when look-

ing straight ahead; but if he turns ninety degrees to the right he can look past the inland side of the house, across the bay, across the copra-makers' village, the far arm of the island, to where the dawn smiles above the coconut trees.

"There are no 'good mornings' when I enter the cook-house," Javan continues. "Miss Tears seems not to know that I have taken my place on the kerosene case and reached for the coffee-pot. Sitting silently over the stove she poaches an egg, while beyond her, sprawled out like an old satyr, William has established himself on top of the heap of coconut husks that is used for firewood. His knees are flexed to his chin; his little eyes are as malicious as those of a serpent. He does not speak nor even smoke his filthy pipe. Perfectly immobile except for his facial muscles he expresses disapproval by a peculiar leer in which the left nostril and the left end of the upper lip are raised slightly. However, I do not see him. By deception which has resolved into habit I have taught myself to believe that William does not exist before sunrise.

"The coffee is piping hot; the egg is in the poaching-pan. (God bless little Miss Tears! In fifteen years I have not been able to teach Mama to poach an egg, but this child does it with complete success after a single instruction!) All things are as they should be. Nothing will mar the fine surface of my perception; nothing will jar my nerves. One word from Miss Tears, one whispered 'Damn!' from William—a hundred things could spoil this precious moment. But its magic will not be broken, for Miss Tears knows intuitively that silence is indicated, while William has been trained by an inexorable hand: he has been told that never again will he have tobacco credit if once he breaks the silence before sunrise. Only I may break it; only I may conjure up by low modulated mutterings the familiar spirit who even now is winging over the sea toward Danger Island.

"On this memorable morning it was a classic dawn, a

Whistler dawn: not one of those frightful dawns by Dürer, nor one of those vulgarly abundant dawns by Jan Van Eyck, nor one of those voluptuous dawns by Gauguin. No; it was a vernal dawn of azure blue, strawberries and buttercups, with, in its upper left-hand corner, a great golden dumpling ascending heavenward, radiating glory. It was a New England water-colour hung against the tropic sky. Above it the high cirrous clouds sparkled like vintage champagne in a blue crystal bowl; below it the deep shadows in the coconut groves brooded inevitable destruction. On the mirror of the bay a nether dawn trembled, while from the copra-makers' village a single column of smoke rose halfway up the wall of coconut trees, and then, reproducing itself on the water, spread out across the trees like a vein of blue shale. It was a restful, cultured, Attic dawn. It could only have been embellished by a pipe organ hymnal, a sonata on the flute, or a reading in measured uninflected voice of Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*

" 'The dawn, Miss Tears,' I cried, 'is the symbol of rebirth, even as the evening is the symbol of approaching death. When the sun has set and the sky is afire I am troubled by gloomy forebodings of disaster, or if I am in a happier mood by a not unpleasant melancholy. But with the first stirring of life in the east hope and joy flood my being. This is the pre-natal stage of the day, when it is guileless, when it looks forward to a glorious birth. The twilight before sunrise suggests the only completely happy period in a man's life: those few short months from the first pulsation of his prenatal heart to his birth.

" 'The dawn, Miss Tears, is a child whose each year is but a moment in our adult time. Our perception is too blunt to follow its rapid growth. One moment the dawn is a blessed babe in pink swaddling clothes; a moment later it is a toddler in a Dutch blue dress; then it is a maiden—even as you, my dear—in a jade-green frock with red ribbons and yellow ruffles; and then, just before sunrise, it is a debutante clad in gold. Keep your eyes fixed on the

dawn and you will observe not the slightest change, any more than a father will observe the change in his growing daughter; turn your eyes away and count to sixty; look again, and lo! chaste, white save only for two red lips and a golden curl, a new and more glorious dawn—a hymenal dawn standing before the altar of the morning.

" 'It is at such times, as you may see for yourself if you will glance over my shoulder, that images are conjured out of the dawn. They are sharply defined and yet tenuous, transient and yet as real as the picture one sees on a blank sheet of paper after staring at a negative in black and white. Ships appear in the clouds—great sailing-vessels with colourful sails, steamers with port-holes glowing. There are horses, rearing, plunging, ready for us to mount on their backs and to gallop away—far, far away from the world of reality to the world of dreams. There are serpents and golden images, black oxen, banners, fiery crosses, storeyed centaurs treading forward in the cloud-cañons of the sky—mystic symbols. There is wisdom in the dawn, fountains of eternal youth sparkling high in the heavens. There is harmony and rhythm in the smooth-sailing clouds, the transitions of colour.

" 'Do not speak, Miss Tears. One must meet the Presence of the Dawn in silence, not as the humbler orders, chattering like a flock of magpies over a spilled bag of rice. Such people have not had the advantage of the training I have bestowed upon you; they are the ones who make art galleries hideous, who voice reactions during concerts, who observe orally the mountain crag and the painted desert. The Familiar Spirit of the Dawn must be lured by silence, meditation, and a responsive soul. He is a coy spirit: if you so much as whistle a strain from *Tosca* he will flit away, leaving only a smudge of colour where an instant before there had been a pastel framed in gold. He is so coy that not only must there be silence in the cook-house, but also a cloistral stillness in the mind. All conscious thought must be banished; even the hand, moving

with the coffee-bowl to and from the lips, must act spontaneously. Then, with the mind sublimated, the silent watcher fixes his eyes, his soul on the dawn, and there appears before him a familiar spirit who tells of things that stir the inner man with a great and quiet love.

" 'Silence, Miss Tears!' and turning I stared to eastward. The coffee cooled in my bowl. Miss Tears and William exchanged troubled glances. The dawn brightened rapidly with great bursts of colour that merged in one another, dissolved in the infinite blue, reappeared in a glowing nimbus of gold above the distant coconut trees. The islet itself seemed blacker than ever, but below it an everted dawn transpired on the mirror-like water, sharply defined close to the far point, but trembling with moving lights and shadows where the wind ruffled the surface of the bay. It seemed that the fluffy little clouds were checked in mid-heaven, the wind was hushed, expectant. Then, formed from this air and colour—formed so gradually that only by slow degrees did I become aware of his presence—the Familiar Spirit of the Dawn hovered on outstretched wings close above the beach, his eyes fixed on me in a pensive gaze. Only for a moment was he there, but during that moment I knew why the ancient Greeks had peopled the sky with gods, why poets write strangely beautiful though meaningless verse in their effort to capture the unknown, why even modern man, at long separated intervals, rises above materialism to believe in a spiritual inherence and to name it God. Only for a moment did he hover there; then on motionless wings he soared across the point of Matauea, across the lagoon and the western reef.

" 'Ah, Miss Tears!' I cried, 'to fly before the sunrise, to live eternally in unending twilight, to wing on, timelessly, in the dawn, a familiar spirit forever unborn!'

"I then emptied my bowl of coffee, and, rising, 'Good morning, Miss Tears,' I said. 'How beautiful you are—as immaculate as the dawn!'

"And then, with a sigh, turning to William, 'Good

morning, William,' I said. 'You may light your pipe now. You may even speak, if you must.'

"The heathen retainer unfolded himself from the top of the pile of coconut husks, stretched with an unnecessarily audible grunt, gave me a glance nasty with cynicism, shrugged his bony shoulders, and tramped out of the cook-house, laughing in a short, crepitating, utterly snobbish manner."

(And here, with regret, one replaces Mr. Moonlight's diary on the shelf in the trading station.)

XVIII

Promiscuity Among the Young Unmarried

"They're going the rounds," Mama said—or rather she said nothing of the kind, but in translating Mama's sentence into English one is obliged to resort to idiomatic expression if one would give a correct interpretation of Mama's peculiar genius in language. So one has used "They're going the rounds" in the same sense a gentleman uses it when referring to an excursion to the various bars on New Year's Eve—not in the sense a night watchman, an officer of the day, or a prize-fighter uses it. However, the intelligent reader (one in a thousand) will understand this without being told; but had one translated literally Mama's actual expression, *"Te teré nei,"* into "They are sailing," even the intelligent reader might not have grasped that Mama had referred to the inevitable period of promiscuity upon which Toa and Miss Red-Jones were now embarking.

Mama wagged her head and grinned in a way that suggested promiscuity as much as had her words. *"Te teré nei!"* she said again, this time sardonically, and punctuating her sentence with an exclamation point by dropping an egg in the frying-pan without first removing the shell.

"Yes, Mama; is there another one?"

"Another one!" Mama cried, turning toward her employer with a worldly-wise leer. "A dozen of them, more than likely!"

"I am referring to the egg, woman. Is there another egg? And incidentally I will mention that while you were ill Miss Tears each morning poached, Mama, poached an egg to perfection; but now that you have survived Doctor Pau's treatment I am again obliged to submit to your eccentricities. Look in the frying-pan, woman!"

Mama glanced in the frying-pan, shrugged her shoulders wearily, and, "No; there are no more, Javan," she said. "Don't fret; I'll cook this one till it's hard, and then you can pick the shell off. . . . But you really should have been on the outer beach last night. I'm sure the Reverend Johns would never have allowed it. . . ."

"Mama, the Reverend Johns has no authority over my private life."

"That's right, Javan. He would never have allowed them to sing and dance all night, like they did. And Tioni —that's the boy who has been to Samoa—Tioni showed them how to dance the siva, though really it wasn't dancing at all, because all they did was to sit on the sand and wiggle their shoulders and sing. I don't think the Samoans. . . ."

"Mama, Mama! Collect your thoughts!"

". . . know how to dance at all because they put lime on their hair to make it red, just like the white men's hair, and the white men can't dance—that is—what was I saying, Javan? . . . Oh yes; then Tioni showed them how to dance the Tokelau dance, and then he shouted so loudly that everybody could hear him: 'Now I'm going to be Miss Red-Jones's sweetheart! It's my turn now!' and he reached out like he was going to take hold of her; but she jumped to one side, though not very far, because she thought he was so wonderful, knowing both the Samoan siva and the Tokelau dance. . . . But then in the Tokelau dance you don't do anything but sing a verse out of the Bible, over and over again, like this: *'And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth,'* and swing your arms around and shake hands and kick up your toes, though sometimes you reach out like you were begging for tobacco. That's the way with the Tokelau people: they're always begging for tobacco, so even in their dance they keep doing it because it's what you call a bad habit. . . . Javan, do you think Noah was really six hundred years old?"

"Unlikely, Mama. If you, who are less than eighty, can-

not keep your mind on your subject it is unlikely that Noah could keep his mind on ark building in his six-hundredth year. . . . Now, woman, Miss Red-Jones has jumped a little to one side. I am on tenterhooks. Proceed."

"And then all the boys said it was a good idea, because it wasn't fair for Toa to keep Miss Red-Jones all to himself, and none of the other boys had made love to her except George, who didn't count, he being Toa's bosom friend." At this point Mama dished up the egg; then, without losing the thread of her story, she went on: "And that every boy and girl had a right to make love to anybody they liked—that is, until they chose their true husbands or wives, when they had to stop all that foolishness and join the church. Then that terrible man, Bones, shouted: 'Yes; that's right!' "

"Was Bones there, Mama?" Javan asked as he started to pick the shell from the egg.

"Yes; but no one had seen him till then. He had kept hidden behind some magnolia bushes, because he knows that the young unmarried don't like him to be interfering. He's just like one of those great big cats that the Reverend Johns told us about—those great big cats that crouch in the magnolia bushes waiting for people to pass, when they jump out and eat them! How terrible, Javan! Are there really great big cats that eat people?"

"Nobody had seen him till then, because he had kept hidden behind some magnolia bushes."

"How did you know that, Javan?" Mama asked, eyeing him sharply. "I think you must have been on the outer beach last night—just like Bones—like one of those great big cats!"

"Yes, yes, Mama; go on."

"So they all ran away to hide from Bones, and they got so scattered in the bush that Toa couldn't find Miss Red-Jones, because he had got separated from her; and Miss Red-Jones couldn't find Toa, because she had got separated from him, too. Oh! it was so nice and exciting! But Tioni

found Miss Red-Jones, and he said again what he had said before, and some other things, too. And, of course, Miss Red-Jones couldn't object, because he had taught them the Samoan siva and the Tokelau dance. Only in the Tokelau dance. . . ."

"And Toa, Mama—what did Toa do?"

"Oh yes," Mama said, with a snicker and a toss of her head. *"Te teré nei! Te teré nei!* Lord only knows what he *didn't* do last night!"

"Is this the end of Toa's love-affair?" Javan asked, but only to goad Mama on.

"How silly!" she snapped. "Of course it isn't the end!" Then, with a sigh, glancing out the cook-house to where a gaudy, plebeian dawn discoloured the sky, she declaimed: "They're just like ducks, Javan. You throw some lovely grated coconut to a duck and he'll start gobbling it up; then you throw him some mouldy old rice and he'll leave the lovely coconut to try the bad rice. . . ."

"Ah!" Javan cried, interrupting her to filch and amplify her simile; "but he'll come back to the coconut if he likes it best! You're a wise old woman, Mama, even if you can't poach an egg. And suppose the duck had been prevented from tasting the mouldy rice—suppose he had been tied by the thong of convention or penned off from the rice by the chicken netting of morals. Then, Mama, he would go through life regretting, eating his heart away, because, when a duckling, he had been prohibited rice. His mind would be aberrated by a complex of frustration; he would imagine mysterious and ecstatic qualities in mouldy rice. But our Danger Island duckling, dining on the choicest morsel of coconut, is at liberty to leave it and sample all the grades of rice from India Coolie to Number One Pearl; and, finally, if still his choice is coconut, he may return to it, his first-loved nut, to peck it in complete satisfaction for the rest of his days."

"Of course," Mama said huffily; "just as I was telling you before you interrupted. . . ."

"Toa," Javan cried, raising his voice and allowing his mind the same freedom of expression that the youths allow their libidos, the coffee having by now stirred up the rich alluvium in his brain in spite of the stagnating effect of the egg—"Toa may marry his first love, or his second, third, or twentieth; but when he does marry he will live happily with his wife. The reason is evident: there will be no grab-bag luck. Before marriage he will know intimately the one he finally chooses; he will know intimately dozens of others. Toa and his wife will settle down to married bliss satisfied, through actual experimentation, that they are the mates best suited to one another."

Javan paused for a brief moment, eyed Mama severely to keep her quiet, collected his thoughts, and continued: "In the lands of the Anglo-Saxons there is a heritage of greed and jealousy which makes objectionable the thought of marrying a woman who has been loved by other men. This heritage has been developed through ages when the attainment of food, shelter, safety, a mate, has been consummated only by proving one's self superior to others. Civilised man has idolised private property; 'mine' has become a sacred word to him; his pride has been injured and his safety jeopardised when others have conquered his property. His monogamic marriage is a direct reflection of his attitude toward property." (Here Javan shifted to English and became totally oblivious of Mama's presence.) "Conversely, we Danger Islanders have little personal property, for the land and the food-bearing plants are communally owned. It follows that our pre-marriage promiscuity is a natural incident to our economic pattern. As to continence during the married state, I believe it is the result of there being little incentive to promiscuity among a people who have so thoroughly sowed their wild oats in their youth.

"A second reason for chastity in civilised countries is that an illegitimate child is given an opprobrious name (there were no Polynesian words for 'bastard' and 'prosti-

tute' until the missionaries invented them), incurs disgrace by the accident of its birth, and, in many cases, even loses the right to inherit. The mother is designated by a still more opprobrious name, and has little chance of living in respectable society. Even her parents, forgetting the lesson of genes and environment, cast her from their door. Her future is hopeless, her child an outcast.

"But on a primitive island like this—an island just emerging from the neolithic culture; an island that the white missionaries are so anxious to lead in the ways of civilised righteousness—an unmarried mother is honoured, and, what is more, she has a better chance than a maiden to find a good husband. The simple and unenlightened Danger Islanders desire children to carry their names and traditions beyond the grave. When they find women who are congenial companions, physically satisfying, and of proven fecundity, they marry at once, happy in the prospect of offspring.

"The mother's pre-marriage child is no problem at all: he belongs to the village, like all the other children; a taro bed is set aside for him, ten coconut trees are given to him, and he receives his share of the copra money before he is out of his swaddling clothes. And, moreover, the Danger Islanders are a child-loving race, so if the mother does not wish to take her baby to her husband's house, there will be scores of families ready to adopt him. He brings no disgrace or expense upon the adopting family.

"In most countries," Javan continued, pouring the last of the coffee in his bowl and adding the cognac, "the economic status of a woman makes her dependent upon a man, particularly when she has reached middle age and borne children. This is a rule. There are many exceptions, but the rule will never be changed until women cease to bear children or the government takes their children under its care, even as do the Danger Island villages. But all this and all it implies is too evident to be expatiated on; yet, when I tell the neighbours about

the situation of an unmarried mother in civilisation they can scarcely believe that countries, so superior to their atoll, should allow any member of their communities to suffer from want."

"Yes, Javan," Mama said hurriedly; "George didn't like it at all because Tioni had taken her, for George said. . . ."

"The Danger Island mother," Javan cried, shifting back to the local idiom with the returning consciousness of Mama's presence, "is better off than she was as a maid, for she has her own share of the island's wealth as well as her baby's share, and a native baby, strangely unlike a civilised one, requires little more than its mother's milk. Thus a premium is given to motherhood."

Javan spoke these last words in a huff, for he felt that Mama had not been listening attentively. That same night, however, William and he discussed the relative merits of the sex tapu in civilised and primitive countries.

There is a coral boulder on the reef south of Matauea, high and dry during easterly trades when very little sea washes over the barrier. To one side, in a deep crevice, the *malau*—a red, big-eyed fish unsurpassed for flavour—take a white fly on the fourteenth to the twenty-first nights of the moon; and on these nights William and Javan may fish until well into the morning hours. This evening they waded through the shallows and took their customary place on the boulder. The moon had risen before sunset; the trade wind had died to the memory of a breeze. Along the shore the coconut trees stood straight and mute, gleaming faintly above the white glare of the beach. The deeper pools in the shallows were outlined like shadows on the water; the reef lay like a dull copper highway, mottled with glittering pools where spotted sea eels stared into the night. The outer side of the reef was aglow with a fringe of surf, phosphorescent, unearthly, washing sibilantly across the coral and muttering in the crevices. At their feet the black water in the crevice surged back

and forth slowly; but at times, when a heavy sea poured over the reef and purled about the boulder, the crevice would whiten with foam. Then they would set their poles aside until the water had cleared and the red *malau* darted about the surface again, dissolved in the deep black, magically reappeared and leaped at their flies, or oftener smelled them and finned wisely away.

Presently two figures appeared on the beach; others followed until a score or more were sitting on the sand in pairs or groups, strolling along the edge of the shallows, slipping into the obscurity of the magnolia bushes.

A girl's voice rose in the still night air—the voice of Miss Red-Jones, Javan fancied—wild and piercing, chanting one of the old song-legends in a note of savage abandonment. Other voices joined, girls carrying the leading refrain while boys sang a counter melody or chanted in deep rhythmic monotones, like the beat of kettle-drums. A lone voice rose above the others to sing a hymn to the stars, a refrain of but a score of notes, but which seemed to tell of the past glory of the Polynesians, the loneliness of remote atolls, the passion of love, the zest of living, the tragedy of death. A shrill epicene soprano broke in with a wild little flurry of notes; and Javan, glancing from the now foam-frothed crevice to the beach, fancied he could see Miss Tears huddled on the sand, her head thrown back; then suddenly it was only a black indefinite shadow that he was staring at, for the image of Miss Tears in his mind's eye had become disassociated with the shape on the beach; and other singers had helped to break the illusion, had joined in a clamour of voices soon to languish to a chanted Lydian measure, soft and sensuous, then to end abruptly, as though a surge of passion had swept over them, choking their voices.

William and Javan fished vigorously, for now the *malau* were biting well. As they pulled out one fish after another and dropped them in the frond basket Javan's mind was far from the sport. He was wondering what would happen

if the Danger Island love feasts were permitted among the youths of civilised countries.

"William," he said, "I have been thinking about these wild youths on the outer beach, and it has occurred to me that it is a pity such natural love-making cannot be practised in civilised countries. But it is impossible. We have afflictions which make chastity a health measure. . . . Aye; it would never work on the outer beach of San Francisco or New York. The whites are a high-strung race of extremists; they would become voluptuaries, as have many of the European peoples to whom great sexual licence has been granted. These people have developed a state where perversion is the rule, where prostitution is commoner than marriage and seldom leads to marriage. There is no parallel between the sexual life of the civilised man and the primitive man. Though one evolved from the other by the natural if not inevitable necessity of the sex tapu reflecting the contemporary economic pattern, the two systems are now so disparate that they resolve into no more than an interesting contrast.

"Now, William, these youths on the outer beach are not degenerate: there is no trace of perversion in their loose relations. But promiscuity in civilised countries *is* perverse, for it is a distorted, or totally untrue, reflection of the economic and cultural pattern. On Danger Island it is a perfect exemplification of the free and easy art of living."

As often before, Javan had been talking to himself more than to William. Now he turned to the heathen, and asked: "William, you have seen something of the world: who do you think solves this sex problem most logically and healthfully: the white people or the people of Danger Island?"

"Hell and damnation!" William growled. "What do the white fellers know about making babies? When I go Barbary Coast and buy half-dozen womans. . . ."

"You mean," Javan cried, unconsciously paraphrasing

Laurence Sterne, "that they handle matters much better on Danger Island."

The old man grunted an affirmative. The moon had set; the smoky light of morning was rising above the skyline. They rose from the boulder and waded back to Matauea.

XIX

The Villagers Return to the Main Islet

It was dead calm when Javan started back for the main islet; but, nevertheless, he had William hoist the sail so it would shade him where he had placed his steamer chair midway in the canoe. When the wind is fresh he enjoys sailing the craft himself, but on calm days he does not paddle, for he has learned that one must not exert one's self in the tropics. He has found this forced idleness the greatest disadvantage to life in the South Seas. Often he speaks of his regret that he cannot paddle his canoe out into the open sea, a string of coconuts and a dried fish for food—paddle on and on to visit the far-flung islands, as did the ancient Polynesian navigators. The stars would blaze his path across the sea, the flight of birds tell him of the proximity of land. At intervals he would nibble a morsel of coconut, or even allow himself a few moments' sleep; but then, grasping firmly the paddle, he would propel the canoe forward—on, on for thousands of leagues!"

"No, William, I am not lazy, as you impolitely put it," he said as he sank back in the steamer chair and William and Toa started to paddle Mama and him back to the trading station. "I am relaxing. Relaxation is a salutary accomplishment. When the physical man is in repose, the nervous system quieted, the frenzied poundings of the heart stilled to a gentle rhythmic pulsation, then, as with the Hindu yogi, the spiritual man emerges. A channel, formerly blocked by such gross thoughts as 'When do we eat?' or, 'Am I doing the right thing?' is cleared to the unconscious mind, whereupon the man is illumined by a flood of light. . . . Look out for that coral lump, William!

Every time you hit one—and I believe you do so on purpose —my chair is jarred out of place.

"When I relax I am not inactive. Nay; as I said to somebody only the other day: a trader is working when he is lying on the counter the same as an author is working when he is looking out the window. To illustrate, I am now planning how I can sell all the trade goods wholesale, thus conserving valuable ergs which otherwise would be expended in dribbling the goods out in retail sales.

"Now, William, if I sell retail. . . . Just haul in on that sheet a trifle, please. Can't you see the sun is shining on me over the leech of the sail? Thank you, William—but I might mention that a gracious attention to one's orders is more seemly than a grudged compliance. . . . Now, if I sell retail I may receive a few more pennies, even after discounting for the loss from end-yards of print, spilled flour, undersized sticks of tobacco. But on the other hand, my branch storekeeper will do more business, for the people, not having exhausted their funds in a wholesale purchase, will have more money to divide among themselves, and much of this money will go to The Name."

"Close his store," William grunted, for once during their long association having listened to what Javan was saying.

"Then all the customers will come to my store clamouring for credit."

"Don't give 'em any."

"Then I will lose the good-will of the customers, and good-will is important on an island where the people have no use for what one has to sell. On this island it is not a matter of the supply resulting from the demand; here we have a supply of almost anything from lollipops to bakers' caps, but we must create a demand. That is where the crack trader is needed. I must have the good-will of the customers so they will be disposed toward the demand I insidiously impose upon them. Therefore, William, I must sell wholesale, reducing The Name's business to a nominal

amount, taking in most of the cash in a lump sum, and gaining the good-will of the customers by a slight reduction in price—which last, incidentally, I have already provided for by raising the price of the goods to be reduced by an amount equal to said reduction. Thus I may give them even a large reduction and still live up to my reputation as one of the crack traders of the Pacific."

"Tioni," Mama muttered from her place on one of the cross-booms, "George, The Bird, Benny's son, then The Bird again. . . ."

It is not known how many of Miss Red-Jones's lovers she would have named in trying to shift the conversation to a subject more congenial to her peculiar psyche, for Javan, raising his voice, broke in: "Moreover, after selling the bulk of my goods I can discharge my store-boy, then devote myself to relaxation, to reading Pareto, to pondering subconscious mushroom beds and cosmic rays, to planning another wholesale coup when the people are again in funds. Relaxation, William, Mama, Toa, is a precious accomplishment, to be practised, however, only by traders and authors: never by retainers, store-boys, and cooks—simple people whose minds are incapable of flights above those of a carnal nature.

"It is remarkable how much we can accomplish in the South Seas while relaxing, and how little we can accomplish while working. So far as we are concerned, Mr. Longfellow was in error when he wrote:

> *The heights by great men reached and kept*
> *Were not attained by sudden flight,*
> *But they, while their companions slept,*
> *Were toiling upward in the night.*

Longfellow means that the great men were toiling upward. Howbeit, Professor Walter Murdock comments on these verses: 'That would be a great truth, if the world's "great men" were the indefatigable climbers and the in-

corrigible pushers, the cotton kings and the prosperous brewers and the millionaires generally,' but 'if by "great men" we mean the immortal servants of mankind, the men whose lives live in gratitude of the race—then you will find that, one and all of them, they were far more given to loafing and inviting the soul than to toiling upward in the night. Far wiser and saner than the gross commercial maxim of Longfellow is the question by an English poet of to-day:

'What is this life, if full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?'

"When a white man first comes to the tropics his most difficult task is to learn to take things easy. He must walk slowly, always sit down when he comes to a roadside bench or a grassy bank, always be free for an afternoon at the club, never lift or carry things or in any other way strain himself. If he tries really to work he is exhausted in an hour, ill in a month, dead in a year. He must learn to let the native population work for him—even as I let the three of you work for me. If his house is on fire he must not jump yelling to his feet, rush this way and that in a perfectly futile, though exhausting, effort to put it out. He must understand instantly the absurdity of a single man trying to extinguish a great conflagration. He must move to a comfortable distance from whence he can send for the neighbours. Likewise in a hurricane, a seismic wave. The wind will not abate for all his whoops and frantic movements; the waves will not flatten even though he runs a mile in two minutes. He should remove himself to a point of vantage, and from there observe calmly and philosophically the forces of nature which, less sapient than he, are exerting themselves, are wearing themselves away to an insignificant puff of wind, a clap of wave.

"The climate here is enervating, to put it mildly: it exhausts one to work at high tension. Moreover, after

the inevitable breakdown it is sometimes impossible to recuperate. During our first year or so in the tropics we try to think and act in the same tempo as in temperate climates. Those of us who learn to slow down the tempo to a lento live happily and even usefully; those who do not learn, leave or die. It is an art salutary and pleasant to sit for hours contemplating the village life moving leisurely, the clouds drifting leisurely above the lagoon, the village hens scratching leisurely the gravel in the cook-house yard.

"The man whose life in the tropics is spiritually complete is he who has mastered the art of relaxation. He does not stagger 'home'—as the English quaintly put it—every few years to recuperate, to restore his worn-out body; but if he does go 'home' it is more than likely that he will soon feel the need of returning to the tropics to recuperate. Nor does he become the moral wreck the novelists would make him out to be. Albeit there are moral wrecks aplenty in the tropics, the unbiased observer will admit that they are in the tropics because they are moral wrecks, afraid to face life, but they have not necessarily become moral wrecks because of living in the tropics."

Having, Javan believed, expressed himself well, he paused to roll a pinch of tobacco in a strip of pandanus leaf. William started talking at once, while Toa paddled steadily, doggedly, as might a man who wished to distract his attention from some distressing apprehension. Mama sat huddled on her cross-boom, scowling, smiling, or staring into the blazing sky as her thoughts flittered from one of the young unmarried to another. (God bless her!) After lighting his cigarette and smoking for a little space, and betimes not paying the slightest attention to William, who as usual was saying nothing of importance, Javan went on:

"Take a little thing like a cigarette. How many of the energetic men really know they smoke? As tensely they dash from the office to the lunch-counter they snatch a packet of 'smokes' from their pocket, jerk out a cigarette, and, still prancing forward, chin thrust out, light it. Then,

their minds on haberdashery and compound interest, they automatically take a few puffs and throw the half-smoked cigarette away. The women are greater offenders than the men. Being high-strung they smoke not for the sedative effect, as one would believe, but to be 'doing something.' They have no time to stand and stare, with arms hanging limply by their sides, mouths open. Smoking among maidens can be charming so long as they indulge gracefully—which means that they must not dirty their dinnerware with cigarette ashes, tea-soaked butts, matches—or among the Spanish señoritas with their long slim panatelas, or the ancient dames with their pipes. Why, Mama, I knew an old Indian woman who chewed tobacco sublimely.

"Now, when I smoke I must be seated or lying down—the latter position is always preferable in the tropics. There must be no distraction, not even from a person's conversation. I roll my own cigarettes so I can make it large or small; I light it and smoke leisurely, aware that I am smoking, tasting the delicious leaf, inhaling the smoke and feeling a pleasurable glow suffusing my entire being. After a smoke I rest for a little space so as to enjoy the meditative mood that invariably follows the use of tobacco. Ten such cigarettes a day are ample. If I smoke more I do not enjoy the same satisfaction: I must be hungry for tobacco to enjoy it.

"Meals, of course, are another item; but it would be superfluous to speak of the difference between civilised feeding and primitive dining. There are, however, people who dine in civilised countries, but they do so only behind the closed doors of their homes. When they are obliged to eat in public they do so with dispatch, cramming themselves in a ten-minute, drug-store feed. I say 'feed' advisedly, Mama, for they are feeding precisely as camels feed; they are filling themselves with food because, first, they are hungry, and, second, it is customary.

"Hand me the umbrella, William," Javan said sharply to the unobservant old fellow. "Can't you see that the sun

is over the leech of the sail again? If you and Toa would only . . . Hello! Isn't that Miss Red-Jones and Miss Tears in the canoe over there? Miss Tears is getting altogether too pretty . . . and how she can poach an egg! . . . I wonder when they will make her into a woman?"

"If you and Toa would only. . . ." Mama prompted sarcastically.

". . . paddle more energetically we might arrive at the station before the sun is too hot. Won't you give them a hand, Mama? Hard manual labour will make you more respectful to your employer. . . . No? Ah, well; I suppose you *are* a trifle infirm, both in mind and body. Ever since Miss Tears poached that egg so perfectly, and put it on buttered toast, too, I have been thinking that the time has come to fire both you and William. When we arrive at the station—if ever we do arrive—you may consider your period of employment with me at an end."

William laughed a good deal about that, and even Mama made a clucking sound which was supposed to indicate irrision. But Toa seemed abstracted in thought. Was he jealous of Toni and the other youths, or did he in some primitive way sense disaster?

"Relaxation with the Nordics," Javan went on, after opening the umbrella, composing himself, and again picking up the thread of his thoughts, "means recreation, and recreation means driving a car as fast as you can, going to a movie to exhaust your nervous energy, tossing off cocktails as though you were trying to set a record, stepping out late with the chorus, or reading ligneous literature and gory-story magazines. To a Nordic who has never mastered the art of sitting, recreation means hard work, and often a vacation is more exhausting than a period of employment.

"I once sailed with a young Nordic who, on this account, well-nigh drove me mad. After a hard day of drifting in the Raiatea lagoon we had tied up to the wharf at Uturoa, our day's work done. I felt tired, so I sat on the end of the wharf, let my feet dangle down, twiddled my

thumbs, and, staring into the clear blue water, relaxed. He sat with me for perhaps one minute, then: 'Well, what ta Hell, Bill, we can't sit here all day!' he cried, jumping to his feet. 'What do we do now?' 'Let us sit here till dark, and relax,' I suggested. At that he broke into a roar of laughter. 'Sit here!' he bellowed. 'Have you gone mad? Come on: let's do something!'

"This young Nordic had been brought up to do things. How absurd! He could not understand that there is amenity in relaxation.

"The man who can relax has in his hands the inestimable faculty of escape. He need not run away from himself, open the second bottle, cut his throat, or jump on his hat; he need only relax. Thus he escapes through passive resistance, and through complete rest fortifies himself for future labours. But these men who never learn to relax," Javan wound up with a flowery burst of rhetoric, "are like the meteors that, flashing through the celestial sphere, soon by their own terrific momentum burn themselves out!"

"There's Deacon Bribery," William muttered, jerking his head toward a tiny dug-out, above the gunwale of which the deacon's head was visible.

"He's asleep!" Mama exclaimed, as though it were something unusual. "We'd better waken him."

"No, Mama; the deacon is relaxing, that is all. When his body is refreshed by a few hours' repose he will—if he hasn't drifted out of sight of land in the meantime—continue on his way, his strength renewed, his spirit revived.

"Like the rest of the Danger Islanders, William, I have been relaxing for the past two months. If my employers hear that I have not entered the station for two months they will, first, decide to discharge me; but later, when they find that my storehouse is full of Number One Sun-dried Copra, they will, I hope, raise my wages.

"Trading, as I see it, need not be associated with

physical exertion. There are the plodding kind of traders who have no store boys, branch stores, or special technique; who sell things over the counter; who dispense penny cuts of tobacco, matches, marbles, lollipops, firecrackers, fish-hooks. They eat European food out of tins, read detective story magazines, marry jealous wives, and make themselves both miserable and ridiculous. Not so we few crack traders of the Pacific. We conduct our business affairs in a big way; our minds have evolved above the penny trucking to the hundred pound wholesale business. At each copra making we ponder how we can consolidate all the petty sales into one gigantic coup, and each year we—or, rather, I —succeed, the others sometimes fail.

"You remember the picnics, William?" Javan asked, as they nosed into the crescent-shaped bay of the main islet.

He was referring to a scheme he had used for three successive years. First, he would suggest to Leeward Village that they have a grand picnic on Frigate Bird Islet. The trading station would give, absolutely free of charge, a tin of biscuits and a tin of lollipops. The men would fish on the day before the picnic, the women fill their ovens with native food. Also, to prove the wealth and generosity of Leeward Village, all the people of the other villages would be invited to spend the day on Frigate Bird, observing the picnickers. Incidentally, the costumes would be blue voile dresses with mercerised silk embroidery, cotton stockings, and canvas shoes, for the women; dungaree coats and trousers, and Fuji silk shirts, for the men; white singlets and shorts, or red muslin dresses, for the children. These costumes would cost a trifle more than the value of Leeward Village's copra, so there would be a small debit account which would be settled at the next copra making. It was highly profitable, particularly when one bears in mind that Javan did not have to suggest a similar picnic to Central or Windward Village. It was a matter of common pride that they should each give one; it was a matter of good business policy that Javan should give

lollipops and biscuits; it was a matter of village prestige that the people should be costumed a little better than had been the Leeward Villagers—with the addition, for instance, of sixpenny lace, back combs, and red neckties. Three picnics a year exhausted both the village funds and Javan's trade goods: there was no need for any sordid retail business.

"And when we organised the Women's Cricket Clubs?" Javan cried as the canoe was beached behind the trading station.

In this instance he was referring to much the same thing. Two years before, he had decided that the women were spending too much of their time sitting in the cook-houses, and that if they could be induced to play cricket he might be able to dispose of the two gross of ladies' bloomers which the Head Office had sent him. The Danger Island women knew nothing of bloomers, but they understood their utility when cricket became the thing. Had any ordinary trader been in charge the bloomers would still be in the station.

"And when we formed the Sanitary League!" Javan chuckled as he opened the trading station and moved toward the case of Special No. IV brew.

In this case, with the concurrence of Chief of Police Ura, Javan had suggested that the women of each village form a league for the purpose of inspecting the villages. Thus, all the women of Leeward Village would file through the three villages and into every man's house, their eyes peeled for uncleanliness. If they discovered so much as a newly-fallen coconut frond in a man's yard, down went that man's name on the list of those to be fined. It was seldom, indeed, that they failed to find unsanitary or uncleanly conditions in every last house. After an inspection they would hand Ura the list, which comprised every man on the island, and Ura, as per inspection, would fine each man four shillings. As no one would be able to pay his fine the entire debt would be taken over by the trading station,

and Javan would pay it to the Sanitary League in muslin dress goods, later deducting the sum from the men's share of the copra money. To this day, as a last resort, the Danger Island women can inspire terror in their men by a casual threat of a Sanitary League inspection.

Javan spent the rest of the day on the trading station balcony, planning the details of a business coup which he had worked out roughly at Matauea. The villagers now had in the neighbourhood of three hundred pounds—ten shillings to each individual—though the money had not yet been divided. Was Javan to sit by and let them divide it, then work himself to a shadow taking it back in retail sales? Was he to turn the bulk of it over to The Name's branch store? Was he to resort to one of his old expedients? Certainly not!

At dusk his plan was complete. He finished the third bottle of brew, then left the station to call a meeting of the Village Fathers. They were soon gathered in the open space before Constable Benny's house, for they have long since learned that Javan calls them only when something spectacular is to be announced.

On this occasion, after a few new jokes and amusing anecdotes, Javan announced that he had decided to organise personally a grand celebration for the week of the Fourth of July. On the second of July there would be a parade through the three villages; on the third of July, three theatricals—not mummeries of Bible stories such as the Reverend Mrs. Johns had objected to, but legitimate drama. Javan himself would teach each village its play: *Ali Baba* for Leeward Village, *Legends of Charlemagne* for Central Village, and *Cinderella* for Windward Village.

At this point Javan paused for some moments; then, raising his voice, for now the people were buzzing with comments, "The costumes," he cried, "will be symbolical of the grand old Stars and Stripes—red, white, and blue! The women of Windward Village will wear red muslin

dresses with white ribbons and blue embroidery; the women of Central Village, white lawn dresses with blue ribbons and red embroidery; the women of Leeward Village, blue voile dresses with red ribbons and white embroidery! The men of the three villages will wear, respectively, khaki pants and red-striped singlets, navy blue pants and white singlets, white drill pants and blue singlets! There will be a picture handkerchief for everybody, as well as firecrackers and whistles! As for the children, they, too, will be clad in a manner suitable for such a significant occasion!"

Again Javan paused, this time to smile in the charming manner he reserves for critical moments in big business ventures. He noted that his plan had been accepted with enthusiasm. Scarcely had he finished speaking before the women started to discuss patterns. Some were for long sleeves, some for putting the Swiss embroidery on the dresses, some for ruffles, and others for tying the ribbons in bow knots. The men were as enthusiastic as the women. That very night (to anticipate) the Leeward Fathers decided to have "balloon-tyre" pants—the kind that sailors wear, wide below. This was a good idea, for they would each need one-quarter yard more of white drill. Javan should have thought of it himself.

After giving them time for the first part of his programme to sink in Javan announced that on the Glorious Fourth itself the three villages would compete in the grand old game of baseball! "Baseball!" he cried, with a startling sweep of his long arms. "The sport of the Pilgrim Fathers, those old pioneers like Daniel Boone and Cotton Mather and Walter Raleigh—those doughty frontiersmen who felled the virgin forests to clear a space for the first American diamond! My neighbours, on the Glorious Fourth we will play baseball—but dressed in costumes suitable for such a spectacular occasion!"

Finally, as Javan was promoting the celebration, he stated that he would present three tins of lollipops (11s.)

to the children, three tins of biscuits (40s.) to the women, and five pounds of twist tobacco (26s.) to the men of each village. This would cost the trading station £11 3s. 4d., but, as the costumes would bring in £296 12s. 10d., the station's gift would not reduce the percentage of profit substantially; and when Javan considered the volume of business he would be taking from the branch store, the matter looked rosy indeed.

The villagers started practising baseball next day, and two nights later they held their first rehearsal of *Cinderella* on the outer beach by Windward Village.

XX

Cinderella and the Moonlight Cosmology

It was a fine night, with plenty of moon to brighten the wide outer beach by Windward Village. Constable Benny sat with Javan on a mat under the pandanus trees. They smoked and stared abstractedly across the narrow stretch of shallow water to where the old Pacific hemmed and hawed and scratched her chest on the coral barrier. A hundred or more of the neighbours were grouped about them; and on the beach they mottled the sand with shadowy patches. Above the rumble of the surf they could hear the cries of children playing in the shallows. It was one of those nights that impress upon Javan Moonlight the blessed loneliness of remote atolls, that fill him with awareness of time, place, and the amenities of the present.

"Times have changed," Benny said. "When I was your store boy we used to trade a stick of tobacco for eight coconuts, and there was free home-brew for the police force."

"Yes," Javan muttered; "but why speak of it? You still have more of the Guest brew than is good for you. . . . There's Jupiter rising from the sea, the Bald Head of Kiri Welo gleaming above the northern point. What was that naughty story you told me about Kiri Welo?"

"You paid only five pounds a ton for the copra," Benny went on, ignoring Javan's question, "and now you have taken all our money back to pay for the costumes for this celebration. When I was your store boy we always had money for tobacco, but now the old men's pipes are cold. Even William is giving up trying to smoke coconut husk. He'll be cadging tobacco from you to-night."

"And I'll give him some. But come, Benny, we must

rehearse. The actors are waiting for us. There is Miss Tern, as wanton as a Paphian slave girl, flirting with the prince. And there is Miss Red-Jones. How lovely her hair is in the moonlight! And Miss Tears . . . how much white blood has she, Benny?"

"Sea Foam's grandfather was a white man, so she is one-eighth white. Shall I tell you about him?"

"No, Benny; there is no time to-night. . . . One-eighth white . . . I think Miss Tears is the loveliest girl on the island—and Miss Red-Jones—and Miss Tern . . . I love them all. But Miss Tern has another kind of beauty: that of a Jewish girl of Babylon, or a dancing girl of Summer, or a Tartarian nomad-maiden. She is my type: wild, beautiful, dangerous, passionate, and ignorant."

"You remember," Benny mumbled, interrupting Javan, "when Captain Viggo paid ten pounds a ton for copra? Ah, Javan, your station was full of lollipops and squeaking shoes in those days. And when we had the May Day festivals the people would run whooping into the churchyard with presents of boxes of matches and pennies for the dancers. Next year they'll be giving coconuts!" He spoke this last in a tone of disgust.

Javan tapped the ashes out of his pipe, turned to Benny, and spoke sharply. "If you are going to rehearse you'll have to do it now," he said. "I didn't come out here to listen to your allusions concerning the superiority of the trading station when you were my store boy."

Benny rose with a grunt of resignation and stepped into the moonlight. "I shall pray," he said. "Afterward you can tell us the story."

When the people of Windward Village had gathered round him, Benny led them in a lengthy prayer, while Javan lay back to recall imperfectly the story of Cinderella, and to decide what kind of version would be acceptable to his neighbours. The version he finally settled on was not faultless from a dramatic point of view, but he reflected that this made little difference, for the play, after all, was

only an excuse for them to wear their fancy clothes. He told them the story when Benny had finished his prayer. They grasped the spirit as well as the details of it immediately, but some of the old and experienced actors thought it could be improved. Then the Village Fathers held council, and the cast was chosen:

The Prince	Toa
Cinderella's Father	The Name
The Millionaire's Valet ..	Deacon Bribery
The Village Parson	Benny
Cinderella	Miss Tern
The Older Sister	Miss Red-Jones
The Younger Sister	Miss Tears
The Stepmother	Bosun-woman
The Fairy Godmother.. ..	Mrs. Sea Foam
Cinderella's Mother	Mama

Dancers, musicians, gravediggers, court-room audience, soldiers of the Prince's army, policemen, a judge, sailors on the American millionaire's yacht, etc.

Javan was alarmed. They had chosen a cast for a tragedy, not a comedy. Toa as the Prince and Miss Tern as Cinderella! And Miss Tern the only girl on the island who would excite Miss Red-Jones's jealousy! And the pretty little Misses Red-Jones and Tears playing the parts of the malicious step-sisters! There was trouble ahead. Javan glanced at Toa, but he could make out little save only that his store boy seemed in a more than usually impulsive mood. For perhaps ten seconds his eyes would turn to Miss Red-Jones, in a guilty glance; then, with his gaze on Miss Tern, he would seem troubled with both apprehension and desire; and finally, as though drama always had and always would occupy his whole attention, he would seem concerned only with playing spectacularly

the leading role in *Cinderella.* Poor Toa! To-morrow, Javan decided, he must find some hard work to steady him.

Javan refilled his pipe, lighted it, and lay back on the mat. It was comfortable on the outer beach that night, for there were no mosquitoes, and the wind, freshened by its long passage over the sea, caressed him with friendly fingers. He felt physically and spiritually well, contented; after the first disquietude he was unconcerned whether Toa played next to Miss Tern, whether she flirted with him, or whether Miss Red-Jones might be jealous. He stared at the stars and wondered why they should be there, in the sky, so purposeless from a modern, utilitarian point of view. Lovers did not need them in this age of movie palaces; navigators had discarded them for the more efficient radio position-finders; astrologers preferred ephemerides to the more picturesque star gazing—aye; but the astronomers needed them, Javan reflected, and the South Sea traders, and the handful of poets who had not turned their entire attention to ugliness. And perhaps the universe needed them, for were not they the genes of Cosmos even as the island universes were the chromosomes? Perhaps so; or perhaps they were simply the phenomena of entropic change.

Javan, of course, is a fatalist; but his conviction does not influence his daily life, for it is too transcendental to be cognisable save on nights like the present one, when the moon is full, his spirit refreshed, his mind active. "The history of an æon," he mused, "is a vast series of images that are flashing through time and space to project themselves in third-dimensional phenomena when they come in contact with a third-dimensional cross-section of the cosmos. The love story of Miss Red-Jones always has and always will exist, only it is some place in time and space where we can perceive it. This love affair can never be lost; it will happen over and over again, in each new æon, when the cosmic rays that carry the story-in-pictures

again are projected on a physical plane. Entropic change is not haphazard; it is predetermined. One need only a Danger Island mind to realise that the Glacial Age could not have come before the earth had cooled, the Machine Age could not have preceded the Stone Age, Bones's rooster could not have crowed before he had pecked out of his shell. Universal, racial, family, barnyard history are inter-related, and a law that applies to suns and planets must equally apply to humans and roosters."

" 'For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return,' " Benny intoned solemnly. By shifting his position Javan could see the constable standing over Mama (Cinderella's mother), who was prostrate on the sand. Wailing mourners crouched around the aged woman; a few grave-diggers stood nonchalantly at one side.

"What are you doing, Benny?" Javan called. "There is no burial in *Cinderella.*"

"Hush, Javan; I am about to pray."

"Again? There is no prayer in *Cinderella.*"

Benny's tone became petulant. "We are burying Cinderella's mother," he said. "You did not tell us the beginning of the story, but we guessed it. We have had the birth scene, and we have decided that Cinderella's mother would have to die before her father could marry the widow-woman with two daughters. Of course, there might be a divorce, but that would make two court scenes."

"No, no, Benny," Javan broke in. "She died. Go ahead. I won't interrupt again."

Benny was praying fervently when Javan rolled over and relit his pipe. Presently he heard someone cry: "Now the American millionaire comes in his yacht with his valet and Cinderella! He sees a fine widow-woman with two daughters! Whoops! They're going to get married! Where's Benny? Marry them, Benny!"

"Their heads have been full of American millionaires ever since the *Zaca* lay off the reef and the San Francisco

banker came ashore with his valet," Javan reflected. "It was the first yacht they had ever seen."

He heard Benny marry the American millionaire to the widow-woman with two daughters; but from then on, for a long time, he paid little attention to the rehearsal. His mind fingered in the treasure chests of memory. "How unreal the gems are," he thought as he recalled his wandering away from Danger Island. There was the voyage to America on the schooner *Tagua,* in 1929, as vague now as a story read in childhood—as vague as *Cinderella.* There was his first European meal, an airplane flight, his Uncle Urban and Aunt Adelina, the maddening white men who asked him where he would be "to-morrow afternoon at two o'clock." As though he, Javan Moonlight, should know where he would be at any given time; as though he had the power of anticipating the future! They could not understand a person who chained himself to no itinerary; and he could not understand these people of his own race.

During that short trip to North America he realised that he had lost touch with civilisation for ever. There was only standing room for him now, from which he could see afar the meaningless movements of life. He found himself a curiosity rather than a member of the old society. He was liked but not accepted as a fellow human. But most of all, he found himself hankering for the spiritual life he had known in solitude. He remembered with feelings of regret the early morning bowls of coffee in the silence of the dawn, in the still hours when old Mama hovered over the cook-house fire as silent as a shadow, and he could stare out across the lagoon, banish thought from his mind and feeling from his body, await the Presence of the Dawn. Such experiences had become a necessity to him; here, among people, they were lost; and if he tried to recapture them by speaking of them to his friends, they would glance at him with startled eyes, and draw away as from a madman, alarmed. Or he would recall the nights

under the stars, on the outer beach . . . or fishing beyond the barrier reef from a tiny canoe resting low on the water like a sleeping sea bird . . . or days on the point of Matauea, swinging in a hammock with a volume of Marcel Proust, unaware of even the world of Danger Island, aware only of the flow of beautiful prose.

Javan found that his sense of values had changed. He disliked money and resented the necessity for striving for it. He found men classifying things of art by their monetary value. Only the rarest of men seemed to understand that a volume of verse which had gone into its twentieth edition might not be as fine a volume which had not sold its first edition. Even a connoisseur would place greater value on a rare copy of an unreadable book than on a common edition of Keat's *Poems;* the theft of a rich man's automobile was classified as "grand," the pilfering of a poor man's last penny as "petty." Javan found that he disliked personal property, that possessions were a curse because they forced one to live solely for their protection. He longed for his Danger Island home furnished in Japanese simplicity: with a table, a chair, Manihiki mats, pillows, a few pictures, many books. He needed no more. a beautiful home elegantly furnished he found barbarous —a place cluttered with things displayed for the purpose of ostentation.

"But you must know where you will be to-morrow afternoon at two o'clock," people would insist; and he would reply: "I am walking along the street. I may turn to the right or I may turn to the left. It depends upon forces which are beyond my control."

"Are you not travelling toward some destination?"

"No; I have no destination in mind. I have lived on Danger Island so long that my acts, like those of the villagers, are controlled by feeling, not reason."

"What a futile life!"

"Perhaps, but I do not feel that it is futile, and I do not invite regret by reasoning about it. There is at least

the element of surprise which is lacking in orderly existence. Why make a task rather than a pleasure of life? If in strolling through life your ultimate goal and all the way stations thereto are anticipated you will derive as little pleasure from the realisation of your expectations as a cinema actor (unless he be utterly vain) derives from watching the projection of a film in which he has played, or an author derives from reading his own book. We easy-going islanders live in a continual state of mild surprise. Not expecting anything to happen, we are pleasurably astonished to find that things happen in spite of our providence."

"You can't make money that way," people told him, and he replied that he did not wish to make money. From then on they avoided him. Lonelier than ever he had been on Danger Island, he turned homewards. And when Benny and William paddled him across the reef it came to him strongly that he had never left the island. All these months of pointless wandering receded into the misty past. A quarter mile away, behind the green barrier of coconut trees, he could see the white coral walls of the houses, brown thatching, the smoke of fires. Benny's round moon-like face glowed from the bow of the canoe; William grunted a curse from his place at the steering paddle. Javan fancied he had been out to *Cockroach Schooner* to drink a bottle of ale with the captain and Supercargo Bates; now he was returning to the trading station where Mama had his tea ready, Bones was waiting to trade a score of coconuts for a mouth-organ.

"Left, right! Left, right! Halt! Vuni, twoi!" Toa the Prince shouted, breaking into Javan's reverie. The column of soldiers came to a halt before Cinderella's house, the drums were silenced, rifle-butts pattered on the sand, Tioni laughed and George made a crowing noise.

Toa shifted his weight from his right foot to his left foot, scratched his head, and, "Where is the American millionaire?" he shouted.

Cinderella's father appeared, accompanied by Deacon Bribery his valet. Both of them shook hands with the Prince and exchanged a few commonplaces about the fishing and the taro crop.

"How are things in the palace?" the millionaire asked.

"Not too bad," the Prince replied. "How's everything with you?"

"So-so," said the millionaire, his eyes contracting to an aperture 16.

"So-so," echoed the valet, lighting his pipe.

Then the American millionaire asked the Prince what had brought him that way.

"There will be a great dance in my palace to-night," Toa informed The Name; "and I have come with my army and my musicians to invite you, your valet, your wife, and your daughter. I am going to marry the girl who loses her silver slipper at midnight."

"Wait a minute!" Javan shouted; but no one paid him any attention, for just then the drums boomed, and Toa bellowed: "Forward marchi! Vuni, twoi! Right turn! Vuni, twoi! Left turn! Vuni, twoi!"

The army marched down the beach, turned to the right, turned to the left, then got terribly muddled trying to do a flank movement, whereupon everybody laughed and decided that it would be fun to rehearse the scene again —only this time they would have more marching, and perhaps a little mock battle in which the warriors of the other villages were slain.

Miss Red-Jones, Javan noticed, had moved to one side. Her auburn hair was black and glossy under the light of the full moon, but her face looked hard, and set, and cold; then he turned his eyes away, for a trill of laughter had come from Miss Tears, as sweet and pure as the tinkling of a fountain.

Presently the moon looked straight down on them, shining tranquilly over the waste of golden sand, the foam stippled shadows. The moonlight glinted on the sleek

pandanus leaves; it glowed on the naked backs of the actors, and revealed among the shadows of the shore bush groups of children squatting as silently as tropic bird fledglings. Behind Javan the shadows in the coconut groves lay still and dead on the bleached coral ground; the polished fronds were crystallised into motionless jade. Then, with a breath of wind, they moved gently, the shadows stirred, the pandanus leaves clattered with a metallic sound, a low grumble came from the outer reef.

"Damn the coconut husk!" Javan heard from somewhere among the trees. "I'd trade my old woman for a pipeful of niggerhead!" Javan did not turn, for he does not believe in indulging William with too much attention. The heathen is conceited enough as it is. It was not long before he had stumped into the mat and squatted down by Javan's side.

"Son of a gun! The devil!" he growled in English. "Well, I gotta smoke. No can help. Goddam!" He started filling his greasy old pipe with coconut husk, grumbling as he did so that times were hard when old whalermen had to smoke such stuff. He fumbled for a long time among his ragged clothes before he produced a box of matches; then he extracted one, held it an inch or two from the box as though about to strike it, and, turning his eyes toward Javan, gave him a glance so pregnant with meaning that it was all but audible.

"Yes, William," Javan said flippantly; "I intended to give you a pipeful, but I wanted you to enjoy it doubly by having first the pleasure of anticipation." With that he gave him his tin. William unloaded his pipe, with a sputter of profanity, remarking betimes that he wanted tobacco, not anticipation; then he filled his pipe from Javan's tin and smoked with noisy satisfaction.

"I was just thinking, William," Javan said, "that we Danger Islanders are governed by feeling, not reason. Our futures are no more planned than was the battle scene in *Cinderella.* This is as it should be, for though there is

pleasure in anticipating an event, there is also a good deal of grief in disappointment. You enjoyed planning how you would cadge a smoke from me; but think of your grief and disgust had I let you smoke the coconut husk!"

"I knew I'd get the tobacco," William growled, but Javan ignored him. Grief in disappointment brought him back to the Moonlight Cosmology.

"You didn't know you would get the tobacco," Javan said. "You surmised that the approaching cosmic rays would so arrange matters that I would once again waste my substance on you. It is simple enough. We, William, are just a projection of images of a third-dimensional cross section of the universe. You can see a similar phenomenon, though in the second dimension, when you watch a missionary's magic-lantern entertainment. Rays of light leave the lantern to carry a picture, at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, and throw it against the screen, where it is materialised, as it were, into something you can see. Now, consider cosmic rays being flashed round the universe. What happens?"

"There's Miss Red-Jones," William grunted, prodding Javan. "Her eyes are glowing like a cat's. She's pretty mad, all right!"

"The rays of light, William, diminish in intensity in inverse ratio to the square of the distance they travel; but they are not lost altogether. In 13×10^{18} years, as I calculate it, they travel round the universe to again project themselves on the third-dimensional cross section which we call the physical world. There they become cognisable as pictures, actions, beingness in time such as we call existence; and there, with intensity renewed, like electric currents passing through a recharging station, they pass into space, but only to repeat, eventually, the performance."

"Toa is dancing with Miss Tern," William grunted, with a malicious laugh.

Certainly, William; he dances with her regularly, once

every 13×10^{18} years. The life of an æon, from one period of primitive chaos to another, is 13×10^{18} years. This is only a nominal estimate, but it is self-evident that the circumference of the universe, measured in light years, must be the same as the life of the universe, measured in years. In other words, the time it takes light to travel round the universe is equal to the life of the universe from one æon to the next. Therefore, as I once tried to point out to an astronomer (who incidentally, treated me very rudely), if we had a telescope powerful enough to make distinguishable to the human eye light rays from 13×10^{18} light years away we would simply observe ourselves as we were at the instant of observation—but one æon before. This would be a silly thing to do."

"Miss Red-Jones has gone down the beach. Why don't you follow her?"

"Because I did not do so during former æons," Javan replied testily. "Through all this one thing is steadfast —light—cosmic light—omega rays. There are cosmic rays somewhere in space now, carrying, at their terrific rate of speed, the story of the moon's break away from the earth; other rays are approaching us, only a few billions of miles away, with the story of Miss Red-Jones's break with Toa—or her reconciliation, who knows? These rays are flashing through space, for billions of billions of years, once in an æon of universal history to project themselves on their third dimensional world. And every time they project themselves the moon again breaks away from the earth, Miss Red-Jones breaks with Toa—or is reconciled —history is repeated, beingness in time and space is reincarnated.

"In the beginning of a cycle, William, when primitive chaos starts to form in a vast nebula, light flows out in all directions, eventually to fill all space. To a third-dimensional conception, one ray goes east and one west; they both describe circles and come back to their starting point, having formed a pattern in the sky like a pair of spectacles.

This is as far from fact as it would be possible to get. The truth, is, William, that each ray goes in all directions, fills all space, and comes back into itself. There is no "direction" in fourth-dimensional space, as we conceive direction; there is only time—and when I say 'time' I do not mean Greenwich mean time but an infinite number of states of being.

"Time, William, is a serpent swallowing its tail. Time is a coral atoll: one walks round the reef to arrive at one's starting-point. Time is a river flowing in a circle. Put a net across the river and call it the third-dimensional universe. Time flows through the meshes in the net and we call it the sequence of events. There is no 'now' at the net. 'Now' would mean death, for the river had ceased to flow. There is no 'now' in life. 'Now' is a chip floating on the River of Time. The 'now' chip passes through the net but does not stop. If we travelled through space at the speed of light we should experience a protracted 'now,' for time would have stopped. Bergson has said that 'Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances." Bergson was wrong. Time—duration—does not gnaw into the future; it floats simultaneously in the future and the past.

"William, remove the River of Time from our picture, but leave the net. Imagine the same series of events transpiring at the net. William, remove the net, but let the same series of events transpire. That is my conception of fourth-dimensional time—of reality."

Just then William started to speak, but Javan silenced him. He was approaching his climax, a climax he reaches only when the Special No. IV is particularly potent, or, like to-night, the full moon is shining directly on him.

"And the purpose of this endless repetition of æons, William," he cried, "is to fertilise each time the mushroom bed of the collective-unconscious mind so that it will produce a rose! This rose—the perfect man—is then transplanted to a higher universe where only roses grow, but

which, in turn, once in an æon produces a flower beautiful beyond our imagination. In the meantime our own mushroom bed, now impoverished by its supreme creation, is dispersed in primitive chaos. There follows the dormant winter period of thermodynamic equilibrium until gradually the rays of cosmic light, from afar in the utter solitudes of space, play again on the third-dimensional chaos, when nebulæ, suns, binaries, Cepheid variables, and such things, again emerge into beingness.

"All this may seem fantastic to your scientific mind, William; but you must not forget that, with the physicists and astronomers vacillating between scores of theories, with no one of them able to give us more than a meagre allowance of facts, with Bergson, Spencer, Comte, telling us one thing to-day, and Pareto telling us it is all nonsense to-morrow, we, the laymen, have a legitimate right to devise a cosmology of our own. A hundred years from now it may be found that our cosmology is no more absurd than those of many of our contemporaries. At least it is picturesque. And furthermore, as Sigmund Freud says, 'If he is left to himself, a neurotic is obliged to replace by his own symptom formations the great group formations from which he is excluded. He creates his own world of imagination for himself, his own religion, his own system of delusions and thus recapitulates the institutions of humanity in a distorted way. . . .'

"Facts, William; you want facts? Why, a scientist once told me he was sure of nothing save only the square of minus-one. Another has written that he can vouch for only the speed of light. Still another claims that minus 273° centigrade—absolute cold—is the only fact that will bear investigation. When the savants admittedly know so little can they blame us for dreaming? Aye, William, and pray God they never know all . . . so we may dream . . . dream of climbing in a one-horse shay and, with Pegasus between the shafts, galloping through space at the speed of light. The Cepheid variables would be our

beacons, warning us of the black nebulæ and the derelict suns. Æon after æon we would go round and round, each time to visit new worlds in exact counterpart to the ones visited before. We would never grow old save only when we stopped at distant planets in distant island universes, there to take notes on the ethnologies of the natives—or, mayhap, to scatter the seeds of the True Faith!"

Javan sank back on the mat. "We will speak of it again," he muttered, "in 13 x 10^{18} years."

"They're having the court scene now," William said, changing the subject.

"The what?"

"The court scene. Whas a matta? You loco? Chief of Police Ura is fining them for dancing after curfew at the Prince's ball."

"Oh, I see; they've dovetailed a court scene into *Cinderella.* I wonder why they don't leave Cinderella out altogether, and call the play *Life at Danger Island?*"

"That's a good idea!" William exclaimed. "That Cinderella story was about the foolishest one I ever heard. It's lucky the Village Fathers had enough sense to add the death and the burial and the millionaire's yacht and all the other details."

"There are no Cinderellas at Danger Island," Javan said musingly, suddenly aware that the world's greatest fairly tale could not be appreciated by his neighbours.

"Hell and damnation! Of course not. All the girls here get their share of the coconuts whether they have stepmothers or not; and if a girl doesn't like her relatives she doesn't have to live with them; and if she's a good-looker she gets a husband without losing a silver slipper or telling tales to a fat fairy godmother. I'll just fill my pipe again and go over to the Village Fathers. I want to advise them to leave Cinderella out of the play."

Javan must have dozed when William had left, or, in the Danger Island manner, become oblivious to the passage of time, for when he rose to return to the trading station

the moon lay low over the pandanus trees, the outer beach was limned with shadow-pictures, the reef thundered with the incoming tide. He started to sing, a habit he indulges in only when alone—

I'm a pilgrim, I'm a stranger,
Rough and thorny is the road. . . .

"Shut up!"

The words were snapped testily from the dense foliage above him.

"Why, William, I thought you had gone home."

"I sleep here sometimes," William growled from the darkness, "and I don't like to be bothered by lubbers who sing out of tune. No mosquitoes here. . . . Toss me your tobacco—and go home."

A great comber thundered along the reef. Javan turned to watch the foaming water sweep shoreward; then he raised his eyes a little to stare across the sea. How empty and lonely it seemed!

Presently he asked William if the Village Fathers had decided to leave Cinderella out of the play.

"No," the old man muttered; "they're going to make her the Prince's sister, and she is going to marry the American millionaire, who will stop ashore and open a *real* trading station."

"That may be better," Javan thought. "Perhaps Miss Red-Jones won't mind Toa playing as Miss Tern's brother."

He took his tobacco tin from his pocket and held it above his head. Instantly, a wrinkled hairy hand reached out of the darkness to snatch it.

"Good night, William," he said, and, without waiting for the inevitable curse, he turned down the path to the lagoon beach and trod the glistening sand to the trading station.

XXI

Three Dresses of Fuji Silk and a Mouth-Organ

"July 1: A bad day in the trading station. Business terrible."

Thus Mr. Moonlight wrote in his diary, breaking his lifelong rule by recording matter other than the dawn. But the temptation to vent his depression in written words must have been great, for business was truly terrible. First there was Deacon Bribery, who came for a dose of salts, and, like the child that believes he should be recompensed for taking the remedy, Deacon thought he should have a stick of tobacco for taking the salts. Then Parson Sea Foam came clucking in through the back doorway to suggest that, in view of the immense profits from the coming celebration, he should have a higher rent. Later, The Name appeared for a furunculous operation and to drink four cups of tea and smoke ounces of Javan's tobacco. Later still, Deacons Yam and Arrowroot staggered in, and though they took their usual doses of aspirin and carminative, neither one offered to make a cash purchase or even hinted that he might buy something in the distant future. And, finally, before Miss Tears arrived, there was an invasion of toddlers, some clamouring for castor oil, while others begged directly for lollipops. Throughout it all Toa stood behind the counter, alert, bright-eyed, smiling in the best commercial manner, ready at a moment's notice to make a sale.

Then Miss Tears entered the station. She was of the age when a girl seems to change overnight into a woman. Under the magnolia bush at Ko, Javan had considered her a lovely child; but now, due perhaps to a subtle change in

his own mind rather than to any change in Miss Tears, he sensed that she had become a young woman. Perhaps she, too, sensed this as she moved with charming effortlessness to the counter, demure and yet unashamed, then stood straight and smiling, without finding it necessary to support herself, even with her finger-tips on the counter, as might a more slovenly girl.

"Here is Miss Tears!" Javan cried. "How beautiful you are, Miss Tears! . . . I can see my image in the pupils of your eyes!"

"Of course, Javan—it is always there."

"What a pretty thing to say! . . . Cut her a dress of that expensive Fuji silk, Toa—three yards of it. . . . A little present for you, Miss Tears: a tribute to your Mongolian eyes. Make it into a dress to-night and wear it to-morrow in the Grand Parade—so I may see it and know you love me. . . . When are we going to get married, Miss Tears?"

"To-morrow, if you like, Javan."

"Ah, well, don't tell that splendid man of God, your father. Good-bye, Miss Tears."

"Good-bye, Javan."

"Do you really want to marry her?" Toa asked when Miss Tears had tripped out of the station.

"No, Toa," Javan replied, with a sigh.

"Then why did you ask her to marry you?"

"It was just a business matter, Toa. In the profession of trading the customer must be humoured. It is good business."

"But it was bad business," Toa said naïvely. "It cost you three yards of Fuji silk, and she didn't do anything but smile a little."

"When your employer states that a certain thing is good business," Javan said sharply, "it is not for you to argue the point with him. Now, bring me a bottle of the Special No. IV. I have a premonition that we may yet make a sale."

After a glass of his excellent brew, Javan lay back on the counter, and he said: "Now, Toa, I noticed during the first night of the rehearsal that you and Miss Tern played the leading parts of the Prince and Cinderella, and that these parts necessitated dancing with Miss Tern, kissing her, and marrying her. I hope that after the rehearsal you went no further."

"No, Javan," Toa said, shaking his head. "I saw that Miss Red-Jones was jealous, so as soon as the rehearsal was over I went to Sea Foam's house and lay on the mat beside her. I wanted her to know that I was not on the outer beach with Miss Tern . . . and I was afraid because of Bones. Have you noticed the way Bones looks at her? He grins when she passes his house, and he joggles his shoulders up and down in a way that frightens me. And Miss Red-Jones—she smiles, and she makes eyes at him. I've seen her. . . ."

"Toa!" Javan cried. "You are becoming as discursive as Mama. Try to concentrate on what you are talking about. You have just laid on the mat beside Miss Red-Jones. . . ."

"Yes, Javan; but that's all I did. She woke up when I put my hand on her, and she threw her arms around me; then she seemed to remember something, for she drew away, and said that I should go and sleep with Miss Tern. Then Sea Foam woke up and began saying things out of the Bible. He told me to go home because this was the Lord's house. So I went home and slept all by myself."

"That was foolish of you, Toa. You should have frightened Miss Red-Jones: flung her over your shoulder and carried her to the outer beach, or threatened her with a club; or you should have given Sea Foam a clip on the chin—something spectacular to show her how much you love her."

"But I do love Miss Red-Jones, Javan. I want to marry her."

"Yes, Toa; and she will come running to your arms

if you treat her rough. She is the type of girl that needs a master; and perhaps that is why she finds something fascinating about Bones. There will be no childish dallying with him. He will take her by the hair and drag her to his cave. This will frighten her and at the same time fascinate her. Put a little of Bones's technique into your love making."

Just then Javan was interrupted by Miss Red-Jones herself, prettier than ever, he thought, now that there was a pouting expression on her oval face, a glint of anger in her eyes. She stepped to the counter, with a light toss of her head which ruffled her hair till it seemed all a-gold in the evening light; then, turning to Javan, she smiled and asked for a sixpenny bottle of perfume.

"There you are, Toa!" Javan exclaimed. "I told you we would make a sale! Give her one of the shilling bottles. The customer must be humoured. Good will. Business policy."

Miss Red-Jones laid a shilling on the counter.

"Sixpence change, Toa," Javan said.

"Sixpence . . . sixpence," Toa muttered abstractedly, his eyes fixed moodily on Miss Red-Jones. Then he started, as though having just heard Javan, reached in the counter cash drawer, took out sixpence and handed it to her.

After picking up the sixpence and the perfume Miss Red-Jones moved to Javan's end of the counter, leaned over so her elbows were resting on a corner of the mat, and glanced at him, a troubling smile playing on her lips.

"How pretty you are, Miss Red-Jones!"

"That's what you said to my sister," she replied; then she laughed with the same musical sound the lagoon ripples make on the beach behind the trading station. "Are you really going to marry Miss Tears?" she asked.

"Certainly not, my dear; not so long as you remain single."

"Then why did you give her that beautiful dress?"

"It was just a business matter, Miss Red-Jones. Good will of customer. Strictly business."

An expression of doubt came into Miss Red-Jones's eyes. She pouted and again tossed her head, but this time in a manner that seemed to ask if her own good will were not worth considering. Javan did not have to buy her a dress, however, for Toa seemed suddenly to waken from a trance, and, "I'll buy you a dress, Miss Red-Jones!" he cried.

She turned to him with a faint smile in her eyes if not on her lips. "Will you, little Toa?" she asked, the "little" being an endearing adjective on Danger Island.

"Who pays for it?" Javan asked.

Toa threw out his chest and shouted that he would pay.

"The Name collects your wages," Javan growled, and regretted his words immediately after, for Toa hung his head in complete frustration.

"Never mind, little Toa," Miss Red-Jones murmured. "I know someone who will buy me a dress."

At this point, feeling that the reputation of the trading station was in jeopardy, Javan cried: "Cut her a dress, Toa! Four yards of that expensive Fuji silk we gave Miss Tears. Who cares for expense? I fancy that this firm can keep its women clothed, even though it *is* going bankrupt. Cut her five yards!"

Toa cut the dress and handed it to Miss Red-Jones, who left with a smile for both of them—a smile which could mean almost anything but probably meant nothing at all, though Toa was sure it meant that she was prepared for a complete reconciliation.

"I don't think she is angry with me any more," Toa said when Miss Red-Jones had left.

"Yes, she has forgiven you," Javan agreed. "And it was all because you followed my advice. There will be a complete reconciliation to-night, and in a day or two you can marry her."

"But you said I should be cruel."

Javan sighed and shook his head wearily. "You are quite stupid at times," he said, again lying back on the counter. "I also said that one should humour the customer—and respect one's employer. There are times when one should be magnanimous, so as to show the woman a noble and grateful heart. The time for caveman tactics is when one finds the woman intractable. You may now marry Miss Red-Jones whenever you wish."

"If The Name would only let me!"

"I'll speak to him myself. I'll threaten him when he comes to have another boil lanced. . . . Here is Miss Tern!"

A scarcely audible groan came from Toa. He seemed to blanch and tremble, suddenly to shrivel and shorten till little more than his head was visible above the counter—but his eyes glinted, and not from anger, Javan thought.

For a little space she stood perfectly still, between the counter and the doorway, a finely-chiselled statue in brown marble that had become silken in the twilight. Her hair was as glossy as black satin; her face was carved in the refined Semitic features that never fail to fascinate Javan. He spoke to her of this, for he is fond of Miss Tern. She seemed grateful. She turned her head slowly and smiled in that chaste vestal way that suggests fierce love and sudden death. If ever Javan marries (or so he once said) it will be to a woman of Miss Tern's Akkadian type of beauty. He is fascinated by the great almond-shaped eyes, perfidious but beautiful; the oval face culminating to a gentle little chin; the cheeks, not puffed out like a fat infant's, but Attic in their refined thinness; the hair with only a whisper of waviness, not all tangled in curls that remind one of a Little Lord Fauntleroy or a coil of steel springs; the tiny nose, placed there as an adornment rather than a casing for such vulgar things as nostrils; the lips, just full enough but not stretched across her face; the little ears, hidden, save for the tips of the lobes, beneath her hair; the neck, like neither a swan's nor a longshore-

man's but modelled in perfect harmony with her head, its lines flowing smoothly to breasts jutting and firm: the spiritual type, which is also dangerous and wicked.

She took two steps forward, as lithely as a panther, "The Fuji silk, Toa dear," she said, then glanced at Javan, her lips again forming in their vestal smile.

Toa was in black depression now. He knew that something terrible was about to happen, for through the open doorway and across the road he could see Miss Red-Jones sitting on the churchyard wall. He pulled the bolt of Fuji silk down from its shelf, and then, like a man who after running a mile to catch a train arrives on the platform a few seconds too late and with a gesture of frustration drops his heavy suitcase on the platform, Toa dropped the Fuji silk on the counter. The very thump of the cloth on the wood seemed eloquent of despair.

Miss Tern fingered the cloth for a little time. "How much, Toa?" she asked.

"Two and sixpence a yard," Toa replied, his spirits reviving with the prospect of no sale.

"How much is three yards, little Toa?"

The store-boy picked up a pencil and started to figure on the back of the day book, but finding himself unable to concentrate, he glanced toward Javan.

"Seven and sixpence," Javan said right off.

"Oh!" in a note of pain and surprise. Then she laughed in a way that seemed to Javan tragic—no! very tragic! She glanced at the three shillings in her hand, and from then on for some time she kept her eyes lowered. Javan sensed that she was afraid, or ashamed, to raise them—afraid of the humiliation her tears would cause her, aware that she could hold them back only by keeping her eyes fixed on the three shillings. Then her smile came back, and there was no question about its being tragic now. One sees precisely such a smile on the lips of a plucky little woman who, when questioned about the death of her husband, replies: "Yes; I have lost my husband. I had lived

with him for twenty years." One knows that she is eating her heart away, and one is filled with admiration for her plucky spirit. Just such a smile was now faintly thinning and extending the beautiful lips of Miss Tern. Then, abruptly, seeming to have better control of herself, she raised her eyes and, standing as motionless as a statue of the tragic muse, stared at the rows of California sardines (ovals) on the shelf directly in front of her.

Suddenly, though scarcely visible in the deepening twilight, Miss Tern's great innocent eyes seemed to glisten; then a dew-like moisture formed along the lower eyelids, filtered through the lashes down to the inner corners of her lovely eyes where it was distilled into two limpid pearls that, in turn, coursed down her cheeks to leave in their wake shimmering little paths of moisture. Abruptly she caught her breath; her body stiffened, like that of a woman whose intense self-control has, by an involuntary reflex action, been expressed in bodily tension. Again she caught her breath, in a sob this time, and at the same instant Javan caught his, and, hurriedly brushing a tear from his cheek, turned to Toa.

"Cut her five yards of that expensive Fuji silk!" he shouted. "Five and a half yards! No; cut her six yards! We got to keep the good-will of the customers, humour them, flatter them! Make it an even seven yards! Business is terrible, anyway!"

No sooner had Javan started speaking than an amazing transition seemed to gladden, with magic instantaneity, the tragic features of Miss Tern. Seemingly oblivious to the snarling tone Javan had assumed to conceal his own emotion, she glanced at him with the joyous smile of a Platonic friend. The tears evaporated under the warmth of that smile—that smile which, without any structural change, without so much as the twitching by a hair's breadth of a minor muscle, had become oral with simple childlike gratitude, had transformed her from a marble Melpomene to a living Thalia. She thanked him in a note

as soft and musical as the tinkling of a fountain; then she glided lynx-like out of the trading station, unwrapping the package of Fuji silk the moment she was beyond the doorway, so that Miss Red-Jones, sitting on the churchyard wall, might see the whole seven yards of it and might believe that Toa had given her, also, a beautiful and expensive dress. In fact, she made a point of this, for Toa and Javan, standing in the doorway, could see her passing with studied slowness Miss Red-Jones. They could see her fingering the silk, measuring the whole seven yards of it (only she made it eight) as women measure cloth the world over, her yards being from the tips of her outstretched fingers to a point between her breasts. And when she was directly opposite Miss Red-Jones Toa and Javan could hear her murmur: "How sweet of little Toa to have given me eight yards of Fuji silk!"

This was the last straw for poor little Miss Red-Jones. She jumped to her feet, tossed her head, and, with her hips swinging in a way that would be obscene anywhere else than Danger Island, she marched down the road to Bones's house. It was deep twilight now; she was no more than a shadowy figure; but Toa and Javan surmised what she was doing (while Mama verified the surmise next morning). She stopped before Bones's house, looked straight and meaningfully at the old satyr squatting on his floorless porch, and gave him a sign from those Mongolian eyes of hers that would have stirred the vital forces in an octogenarian. Then she moved down the trail toward the outer beach.

Three minutes later Bones was in the trading station. Long-limbed, hairy, half-naked, one turned one's eyes involuntarily toward his feet, and one felt more than mild surprise on finding that they were not cloven. Strong and muscular and virile as a bull, in the deepening twilight he seemed more animal than human.

"I want a mouth-organ," he grunted; and Javan was tempted to scream: "Make pipes from the reeds in the taro

beds, Bones—Pan's pipes from the body of Syrinx!"

"I want a mouth-organ you can hear a long way off."

Toa moved like a doomed man to the box of mouth-organs. A glint of malice seemed to have come into Bones's eyes.

"I have a flute, Bones!" Javan cried. "A flute is what you want! I have a flageolet, Bones! Don't you want a flageolet to still the panic flutterings of the nymphal hearts?"

Bones glanced at Javan, with a curling of his lips supposed to signify a grin. He took from Toa one of the mouth-organs, raised it to his lips and breathed in it a series of grunts as expressive as the rutting noises of his own boar. A tune, even a harmonious sequence, would be impossible to Bones: his mouth-organ playing is of the symbolic, or impressionistic, or imitative, type, like the rumble of kettle-drums, which conveys the idea of a cannonade, or cymbals the clash of arms. Precisely what Bones's mouth-organ playing suggested, however, one may leave to the imagination.

"How much?" Bones grunted, and, when he had been told, "Put the three shillings down in the big book," he said, and turned to leave.

Then Toa seemed suddenly to come to life. "No credit!" he shouted, startling Javan by the vehemence of his tone.

A leer appeared on Bones's lips. He glanced toward Javan, while Javan in turn glanced toward Toa. But it was only for an instant, for Javan does not like unpleasant sights. "Quite right, Bones," he said airily. "We are giving no more credit to-day. Business is terrible, and we feel it is necessary to make a cash sale."

Bones grinned, dug his hand in his trousers pocket, and brought out three shillings, which he laid on the counter with a deliberate motion, as though he were laying there Toa's death sentence. Then he put the mouth-organ in his pocket and hurried out of the station.

"Be calm, Toa, relax!" Javan cried. "I couldn't refuse Bones. Mouth-organs are not included in the Narcotics Act, though they should be. Break out a few of the Guest brew and drink away your troubles. You silly boy; what a fuss you make about nothing!"

"Bones bought a mouth-organ!" Toa shouted, his dejection suddenly assuming the symptoms of frenzy.

"Yes, Toa; Bones bought a mouth-organ. That's nothing to get excited about."

"You don't know what he's going to use it for! Oh, Javan, I wouldn't mind if it were one of the boys . . . but Bones!"

"Relax, Toa! Break out a dozen bottles of the Special No. IV! Take Miss Tern for a walk on the outer beach! Or better, get a big, ironwood club and brain Bones! It will be good for your soul!"

Toa paid him not the slightest attention. With his usual impulsiveness he dashed round the counter and out the doorway—and that was the last Javan saw of him till nearly midnight.

Constable Benny entered a few moments later to remind Javan that they were to fish with set lines from the outer beach that night.

XXII

In Memory of Jonesy

"It's a fine night," Javan said as he closed the station; "I think we'd better finish our brew on the balcony; then we'll go to the outer beach and catch that fish."

"Okay," the constable replied, airing one of the new-fangled expressions he had learned from William. "Nevva mind, oh yes," as he followed Javan up the steps to the balcony. Mama had lighted the lamp in the living-room, so they closed the door, there being just enough moonlight slanting through the palm fronds to facilitate the simple movements of brew-drinking.

"Who will beat the curfew tom-tom to-night?" Javan asked sarcastically when they were seated cross-legged on the mat, their backs to the balcony railing.

Benny muttered that he would be obliged to give the criminal element a free hand. He could not both beat the curfew and go fishing, and the wild youths would detect and ignore any tom-tom rhythm other than his own.

As constable, Benny is supposed to sound the curfew every night at nine o'clock (Benny mean time), then stump down the coral road, his eyes peeled for night prowlers, rakes, and unfortunate females. But all workers of iniquity respectfully withdraw to their homes at Benny's approach, which is all that he requires of them: his pride in position has been justified; he returns to his wattle-and-thatch headquarters while the night prowlers pursue their evil ways.

"It will be a wild night in the coconut groves," Benny grumbled; then he chuckled dryly, grinned, and mentioned that a police raid would be timely, and that perhaps he would consult his fellow-constables about arresting a few of the safety-match gamblers who certainly would be

dealing stud poker out in Jonesy's clearing on a moonlight night like this.

"There is a veritable crime wave sweeping over Danger Island," Benny declared between gulps of his illegal home-brew. "What with the children playing marbles for keeps, the women betting coconuts in their checker games, and the men gambling for matches, I am being worked to a mere shadow of my former self." He up-ended his glass, sighed deeply, then turned to stare unappreciatively at the lacework of shadows beneath the coconut trees, the gleaming white beach, the miles of scintillating lagoon.

"Even at Danger Island there are cycles of reform," Javan mused. "Here is Benny about to interfere with the match gamblers, and Parson Sea Foam forbidding this and that and the other thing, and Chief of Police Ura fining people right and left. Ah, me! And here I am growling when I know this is the happiest island in the South Seas. But a man must growl, I suppose: it is a psychological necessity, a kind of vent for something or other."

Having expressed himself with his usual precision, he got to thinking about the other white men who had lived on Danger Island, and he wondered why, in most cases, they had died tragically. Were they victims of their own manifestations of disapproval? Did they growl themselves into their graves? He fancied it was something of the kind, complicated by hypochondria and other forms of introspection. There was the Frenchman: even his name has been forgotten; but his grave is in the churchyard, to one side of those of Daniel and Nickel. Then there was the resident agent who left just in time, for he was skin and bones—and there was Jonesy. Jonesy came to Danger Island in the eighteen-seventies. He must have been liked, for when he left the people raised a coral slab—a *mauri ora* —in loving memory to him, in the hernandia groves near the outer beach. And they cleared a wide avenue from it to the sea. Thus, should the ghost of Jonesy pass beyond the reef at night, he would see the clearing and the monu-

ment, and know that he had been mourned and remembered.

"Jonesy, hm! I wonder what feather of tropic bird he was?" Javan thought as he opened a fresh bottle of brew. He must have been careless with the opener, his mind being on a less important subject, for there was an all too audible pop, followed by a spray of foam that whiffed over the balcony railing.

"Damme!" came instantly after from below them. "Javan is drinking on the sly again!"

"It's William," Javan whispered to Benny. "I suppose we'll have to ask him to join us."

"Giving drink to natives is forbidden under the Line Islands Act, 108-b," Benny growled.

But Javan leaned over the railing, and, "Come up, William," he called brightly. "Benny and I were just about to send for you."

"Bloody liar!" William thundered as he stumped up the balcony steps, pulled Javan's only chair noisily across the floor, and, slumping down on it, deposited his feet on the railing. "Well, whas a matter?" he asked, eyeing the bottle of brew.

"William," Javan said, when Benny had brought a glass and grudgingly filled it for the old heathen. "I've been thinking about Jonesy. What do you know about Jonesy?"

"*Jonesy,*" William queried, accenting strongly the first syllable. "Don't I tell you plenty times 'bout *Jonesy?*"

"Never a word, William."

"Oh, bloody hell!" the heathen adventist cursed. "I savvy too much that feller, oh yes. Son-of-a-gun Jonesy, I savvy him all right, all right. I give him half-dozen of my wifes when he come to Danger Island. But that don't make no nevva mind: I got plenty more. . . ."

"William," Javan interrupted, "can't you tell a story without bragging about your many wives?"

The old man gave Javan a hard look, reached for the brew bottle, up-ended it to his lips, and drank noisily.

This, Javan knew, was a gesture of remonstrance.

"Jonesy took them away from you," Benny broke in maliciously. "Everybody knows it."

Then, for the first time in Javan's remembrance, the old braggadocio admitted a fact which lowered his reputation as a local gallant. "That's right," he said; "Jonesy take all of them he want. No can help. Jonesy that-a-way. When he want somet'ing he take it—taro pudding, bunch banana, new mat, half-dozen wifes—he just take 'em, and smile, and say: 'That's all right, me lad. You come along Frisco some day and I treat you fine, see?' Oh, everybody like Jonesy too much: beautiful red hair all the same sunset; smile and sing and dance like hell; pass out the rum; teach all the old mans to play poker, and kiss all the pretty gals all the time. And he tell everybody he's gonna get 'em one fine job on Palmerston Island. Work little, no too much, eat bully-beef, make t'ousand dollars, and come back Danger Island all the same 'Merican millionaire!"

Javan rose. It was time to leave if they were to do any fishing that night. "Come along, Benny," he said; "we'd better start if we're going to be on the outer beach before moonset."

William needed no invitation. After ascertaining that the brew bottle was empty, he rose, with a sniffling sound, and followed them out of the trading station. At one of the paths that lead across the islet they turned to enter the dense groves of coconuts, pandanus, and hernandia trees. Benny led the way. They stumbled over fronds that littered the path, broke through a copse of magnolia bushes, and skirted along the taro-beds of Central Village. These last lay below them in the swampy ground, fields of dark green leaves that reflected the moonlight like dull silver. Beyond the taro-beds, not far from the outer beach, they entered Jonesy's clearing, in a grove of gale-mangled atoll trees where the island doves, the terns, and the frigate birds roost; and there they stopped for a little space. Ahead of them, down the wide avenue that leads to the shallows,

they could see the reef, a white vein across the cloud-mountains tumbled above the horizon. At their feet stood an upright slab of coral.

"It's Jonesy's memory stone," William said; then he grinned, leaned close to Javan, and pointed down the avenue toward the shallows and the reef. "There's Jonesy now," he hissed. "He's flying past out there and looking down the clearing to see if his memory stone is still here."

Javan raised his eyes to glance down the avenue. A column of mist had risen from the reef to drift ghost-like against the sky. It might easily be taken for the spirit of Jonesy on his pilgrimage to his shrine.

"It's only the reef mist, William," Javan said, "—only the reef mist blown across the shallows."

"Nonsense; it's Jonesy."

Just then, as though to emphasise the forlorn feeling that was coming over him, Javan heard an island dove coo from somewhere in the hernandia trees, dolorously, like a lost spirit resigned to sorrow. A puff of wind stirred the leaves overhead; then it dropped to the clearing to envelop them in its heavy odour of tropic vegetation.

"No wonder we Danger Islanders believe in ghosts," Javan thought. "All I need is the sense of expectation, and that column of mist will become a ghost—or that weirdly moving shadow in the pandanus grove—or that dancing light in the taro-beds. If a man comes here with the conviction that he will see the spirit of Jonesy he is not likely to be disappointed."

A cloud passed before the moon to flood the clearing in shadow; the wind freshened; the leaves, though scarcely stirring, seemed to clatter nervously; a comber rumbled along the outer reef; and, as Javan stood there silently feeling the mystery of the night, the island dove cooed again, while his call was taken up by another far off in the groves. All these sounds Javan had heard before, in a seemingly remote past. A feeling of nostalgia came over him, a yearning to recapture some unremembered felicity that,

though now nameless, he knew had at one time filled him with melancholy pleasure. The combers thundered over the reef with rhythmically recurrent verberations—like the distant roar of an express train heard at night—heard ages ago by a boy in bed in a ranch-house in the foot-hills of California. The wind had muttered in the white oak leaves as now it was muttering in the palm fronds of a South Sea atoll; the distant rumble of an express train had come in a resonant tone through the frosty night air; an owl's lugubrious love call; the mystery of sounds of things unseen. How remote in time and place—from middle life to childhood, from a lonely island to the mountains of California—and yet the emotional response to each had been associated with an intrusive melancholy, precious and severe.

Benny broke the spell. "I see that the safety-match gamblers haven't come," he growled. "But they'll be here later. Maybe we'll catch them on our way back."

"No, Benny; the moon will be set in another hour; then it will be dark to play."

"Dark enough to cheat, you mean," Benny growled, as again they started for the outer beach. Then, as an afterthought: "I may play with them a little myself, if the fish aren't biting."

William guffawed in his deep-mouthed way, entirely out of keeping with the eerie night in the groves.

The moon was low; the tide had started to flow. The three of them sat on the edge of the beach, by a fathom-deep pool, there to bait their hooks with minnows and toss them in the water. William took three of the largest minnows, placed them in his cavernous mouth, and chewed them to a chum which he threw in the pool.

Fishing was poor that night; but it was delightful lying on the outer beach, talking desultorily, musing, fabricating dreams; listening to the lap of ripples on the moon-gleaming beach, the rumble of seas on the reef, the lonely cries of the noddy terns; feeling the cool of the sand beneath

them, the touch of the trade wind, the expectant tingling in their fingers gripping the coils of line; smelling and tasting the salty air; watching the moon sink below the horizon, the stars brighten, the clouds move like shadows overhead, their nether spirits dulling the surface of the sea.

So at peace was Javan that presently, when a fish tugged at his line, he lacked the will, or the aggressiveness, to haul it in. Why exert one's self? To-morrow, the day of the Grand Parade, there would be more than enough food for everyone. And did not one fish primarily to give vent to the aggressive impulse? Then, if that impulse needed no outlet, why fish? It was illogical to pull the fish in: there was no economic or psychological excuse for such wanton destruction of life. The fish tugged again; then the line became slack. A complacent chuckle, scarcely audible, escaped Javan's lips.

"Ain't that a fish" William snapped.

"No, William," Javan replied truthfully, for by then the fish had freed itself—"No, William; it was just the current carrying my line around a lump of coral and tautening it. . . . Tell me something about Jonesy, William."

"It was a fish all right; you were too lazy to pull him in," the suspicious old heathen grunted; then he moved a little closer to Javan so as to keep his eyes on both their lines; but it was of little use, for, as one has said, fishing was poor that night from the outer beach.

Soon the flying-fish netters appeared at sea off the northern point, their torches flaring so brightly they illumined the beach more than had the moon, cast dancing lights and shadows across the foam-flecked shallows, transformed the sable curtain of jungle into a silver-green barrier. The fishermen moved beyond the reef slowly, twenty of them in single file, their canoes spaced ten yards apart. At times, before paddling to a new fishing-ground, they would lower their torches and splash them with water until only dull red coals were visible intermittently above the rising and subsiding line of breakers. But presently,

one by one, the torches would flash out again; and so it continued, for an hour or more, until the fishermen had passed and were lost behind the point to southward.

"Jonesy was pretty good at *that*," William said after he had touched a match to his abominable old pipe and sucked on it with a sputtering noise. "I used to take him out in my canoe, and he would net the *malolo* flying-fish on the wing. . . . You know the *malolo*—the four-winged fish that fly this way?" and gracelessly he made a number of flying movements with his hirsute arms. Then, without waiting for Javan to reply that he had not the slightest idea what particular fish had been referred to, "Those *malolo* fish that fly everywhere," he continued, and, with scowling brow: "Javan, do you want to hear any more of this story?"

"No," Javan replied.

"All right. He used to net those *malolo* fish that have four wings and fly everywhere. We would have three torches and six netters, but Jonesy always took the bow of the canoe where it is hard to stand upright, the canoe being so narrow. But he would get the flying-fish, all right."

"How long ago was that?"

"Oh, maybe fifty, maybe a hundred years ago."

"Scarcely a hundred, William. You're not that old."

"Me? Oh, I'm an old duffer. I was born maybe two, maybe three hundred years ago."

"Jonesy came here on Captain Blackbeard's square-rigger," Benny volunteered, egging William on.

"Yes, Captain Blackbeard—the same fellow you call Bully Hayes. You've heard the song about him?—

I shall build a canoe like Blackbeard's,
And sail a hundred miles to Easter Island.
Hipu, hipu, hòo-rah! Hundred miles to Easter Island!

Of course, William gave the "Hipu, hipu, hòo-rah!" its

full value. The thunder of his cheer reverberated over the sea and through the groves.

"Jonesy landed at Danger Island in 1870," Benny said. "I know, because my father used to tell me that it was on the tenth anniversary of the landing of the missionaries. You can see on the church inscription that Jehovah came here in 1860."

"What do you know about it?" William growled. "Wasn't I Jonesy's bosom friend? He came here maybe fifty, maybe a hundred years ago. You keep quiet while I tell the story."

This was all Benny and Javan wanted. They were attentive at once, their eyes turned toward the heathen.

Jonesy, William told them, landed at Danger Island from Captain William (Bully) Hayes's brig *Leonora.* A handsome red-headed man of thirty, he must have been without a trace of conscience, but to have had the capacity for friendship one so often finds among rascals.

Big, black-bearded Bully Hayes and his dandified sailing partner, Benjamin Pease, came ashore with Jonesy. A keg of rum was opened; there was feasting and dancing, speeches and expressions of friendship. Far into the night the island resounded with revelry; the groves were as light as day with the flare of palm-frond torches. Bully Hayes, who could make himself understood on any island, explained that he was leaving Jonesy ashore to recruit a labour gang for Palmerston Island. These labourers, the Bully promised, would be fed every day on delicious boiled beef and coolie rice. They would each receive twenty Chilean dollars a month; and after a year's work they would return to Danger Island with such valuable possessions as sewing machines, chests with musical locks, octagon clocks, striped pants and red silk shirts. This would be a great thing for Danger Island; the Bully was doing it out of the goodness of his heart, his great love for the strong young men of the island.

In six months, the Bully said, he would return; then he sailed away.

Jonesy opened a trading station in Windward Village, ostensibly to buy coconut oil, pearl, shell, and the white bêche-de-mer that had never been gathered from the lagoon. At times he would speak of the labour gang, or would sign on groups of young men who were dreaming of striped pants, silk shirts, chests with musical locks.

Young William became Jonesy's bosom friend from the beginning. He helped him round up the strongest of the young men and induce them to put their crosses on the labour contract. William and Jonesy went fishing beyond the reef, hunting purse crabs on the far islets, bird snaring in the hernandia groves, love-making on the outer beach. William supplied Jonesy with all the native foods, a house, servants; he presented him old artifacts, pearl-shell fish-hooks, Tridacna adzes; he had dances and feasts arranged for him—in a word, he administered to him with typical island hospitality.

Jonesy accepted William's gifts as no more than his due. "That's all right, my bucko!" he would shout. "You come along Frisco some day and I'll treat you fine! I'll introduce you to all the flash white ladies and the grog shops; You look me up and I'll treat you fine!"

The two native missionaries also assisted Jonesy. They preached about the virtue of honest labour, the vice of indolence. They saw a chance for the Danger Islanders to make a little money wherewith to help the church and to pay their own overdue salaries. Finally, the two missionaries themselves signed on, with the understanding that their duties should be of a spiritual nature.

From then on recruiting was easy. "I'll take the lot of you!" Jonesy shouted when the last of the young men had scrawled their crosses. "Everybody from the grandpapas to the babies! We'll leave this island for a few months, and we'll all come back blinking millionaires. We'll build white-man houses with tin roofs, and we'll rig 'em up with

cuckoo clocks and brass bedsteads; and we'll eat bully-beef every day and wear swell shore slops and silk hats. Aye, my buckos! Come along and put your crosses on the dotted line!"

After such a speech he would kick up his heels and whoop as though he himself were a Danger Islander. Then all the people would laugh and say how lucky they were; and they would crowd about him to put their crosses on the dotted line.

For six months Jonesy was entertained like a king. His least wish was law. Whenever the villagers met it was to talk about Jonesy, repeat what he had said, anticipate what he might need, plan what they would buy with the fabulous bags of money that he would pay them for a short year's work. If Jonesy had so wished he might have been high priest, chief missionary, or even king—he might have been virtually the owner of the island. But none of these was good enough for the crack slaver Jonesy: he wanted the lives of every man, woman, and child on the island!

"Jonesy one son of a gun, all right!" William shouted, though there was no need to raise his voice above a whisper. "Oh, he savvy too much!" The heathen pulled in his line, examined critically the bait, bit it off and fixed a fresh bait on the hook.

"I see the old men are bird-netting to-night," Benny muttered. "Jonesy was good at that, too."

"What do you know about it?" William grunted as he threw his line in the pool. "Jonesy was good at everything."

"Shut up your noise!" came from behind them. "The three of you frighten all the noddy terns away."

Glancing over his shoulder, Javan saw a group of the old men—Deacon Bribery, The Name, Arrowfoot, and a few others—while farther along the beach, near the wall of pandanus trees, other groups slouched along, their pole nets across their shoulders. One by one they disappeared

in the dense shadows, to climb the pandanus trees, perch high on the limbs and call the terns. Presently Javan heard the first of them, "Caw-caw-caw-caw-caw!" mimicking the throaty call of the noddy terns. "Caw-caw-caw-caw-caw!" was echoed from among the trees as the old men, their pole nets thrust out, waited for the birds to swoop into the shadows. Sometimes the call would be changed to a libidinous "Cawk-cawk-cawk!" A dozen black shapes would swoop overhead, answering the call, then disappear among the trees. There would follow a swishing sound, the squawking of a netted bird, a grunted "I got him!" then a thump as the bird, his neck wrung, was tossed to the ground. The old men, like the flying-fish netters, were hunting food for the Grand Parade.

William refilled his pipe and lit it.

"Tell us about the time you sailed on Captain Pester's whaler?" Javan asked craftily.

"Whas a matta?" the heathen growled, turning his sharp little eyes toward Javan. "You no wanna hear all about Jonesy? Well, bloody hell! I tell you anyway, nevva mind.

"One day, maybe-so six months after Jonesy come stop ashore, one lubber on the outer beach sing out: 'Oh, sail ho! Nevva mind, oh yes, sail ho! sail ho!' " At this point William, having sufficiently aired his English, continued the story in native:

"It's Bully Hayes!" Jonesy shouted when he heard the cry of "Sail ho!" "Come along, Bucko William!"

Gripping William's arm they ran to Leeward Village, and there they saw, about five miles off, the familiar spars of His Majesty's Gunboat *Rosario*. She rolled slowly, with a taut bowline, in the long easy swell. The wind was scarcely fresh enough to fill her sails. Beating against the current that sets to the south-west along the island, she would not make the reef till dark; but she might lower one of her boats at any time, and send a few men ashore.

"That's fine!" William exclaimed. "Plenty gunboat

mans come ashore. Maybe-so bring one barrel grog, all the same Bully Blackbeard!"

Jonesy stood stock-still for as long as five minutes, cursing softly, scowling, his face as red as his flaming hair. But presently he turned to William, with a shrug and a laugh, and, "Come along, Matey!" he cried. "Let's you and me fill the reef boat with a lot of gear and take it aboard the gunboat—coconuts and taro and bananas and store provisions and such things." Then he hurried with William to the trading station, on the windward side of the island.

"Lay to, William!" he cried. "Get some boys to help you. Bring plenty of ripe coconuts and young drinking nuts. Those swabs aboard the *Rosario* will want to fill up on coconuts, blast them!"

When William and the others had returned with several hundred nuts, they found Jonesy on the beach by a heap of sea bags and chests, kegs of biscuits, casks of water, everything a man would need for a long voyage.

"Some presents for the limeys, damn them!" Jonesy snarled. "Lend a hand, boys; let's get the reef boat in the water."

So they dragged the boat to the shallows, piled the coconuts and the rest of the gear aboard, then pulled her to the reef where she was floated in the canoe passage, ready to be poled to sea.

William was mildly surprised at all this. It seemed odd that Jonesy should take such things as sea-bags and water-casks aboard the gunboat; but then white men were always doing incomprehensible things. He was more than mildly surprised when, on starting to climb in the boat to give his friend a hand, Jonesy motioned him ashore.

"Good-bye, William, my bucko!" the slaver shouted, picking up one of the oars. "When the gunboat swabs come ashore tell 'em Jonesy was one too many for them! Tell 'em their bird has flown, damn their eyes!"

"Wait a minute!" William sang out. "I go along too!"

"No, you don't, my bucko!" Jonesy shouted back as he poled the boat through the passage. "Good-bye. You've been a good sport. Don't forget what I told you: you come along Frisco and look me up. I'll treat you fine!" He laughed wildly, hoisted the sail, and, the light breeze filling the canvas, the boat moved slowly along the reef until it was lost behind the islet of Ko.

"Poor Jonesy!" Benny muttered. "Nobody ever heard of him again. I think his boat got capsized, or maybe it sank, or maybe he couldn't find another island."

The flying-fish netters were opposite them again. Across the reef, two hundred yards away, half-naked men were visible in the torchlight, standing upright in their canoes, their nets, on ten-foot poles, thrust out to catch the little flyers. The torches flared so brightly that, glancing over his shoulder, Javan could see the huddled shapes of the old men perched in the pandanus trees. "Caw-caw-caw-caw-caw!" croaked the old men. "Caw-caw-caw-caw-caw!" came the terns' reply. There was a swishing of pole nets, grumbles of disappointment, chuckles of satisfaction as necks were wrung and bodies thumped to the ground.

The torches were lowered. The lights died down to red coals glowing above the reef foam, lost when a heavy comber flung spray in the air.

"We're the only unlucky ones to-night," Benny grumbled. "We'll have no food for our tables during the Grand Parade. The moon has been down an hour, it's high tide, and still we haven't caught a fish!"

"Let's go home," Javan said strategically, starting to rise.

"Sit down!" William bellowed. "When I start a story I finish it!"

It was not till the next morning that a group of the gunboat men came ashore. They found that their bird had flown, right enough; and in the trading station—left there as a sardonic gesture, mayhap—they found the labour con-

tract. One of the officers read it aloud, smiling grimly at such clauses as, "We, the undersigned Kanakas, agree to sell for nothing our bodies and souls until Hell takes us." After reading the contract the officer turned to the natives and tried to explain, principally by hand talk, that had they sailed with Jonesy they would never have seen Danger Island again. As William put it: "All finish! No come back no more!"

The people thought that this was a foolish thing to say. They understood the officer to have referred to going with Jonesy in the reef boat. Of course, they would not have lived to see Danger Island again. The boat was too small to hold more than a dozen of them. . . . Poor Jonesy! Perhaps even now he had met his death at sea!

Young William, who had picked up the first of his profane English from Jonesy, understood the gunboat officer perfectly; but he must have wished to protect the good name of his bosom friend, for he never breathed a word of the truth—or perhaps it was because he was as cantankerous and secretive as a youth as he is now in his old age. It was years before the Danger Islanders learned how narrowly they had escaped ending their lives in the Peruvian guano islands; and long before that time they had raised the memory stone to Jonesy, in the clearing by the outer beach where, mayhap, even now the safety-match gamblers were bearding Constable Benny.

"I t'ink maybe-so six months after Jonesy go away one of his wifes have one boy what she call Red-Hair," William said.

"Yes; that was to be expected."

"And by 'nd by Red-Hair catch one fat wife, and have one boy what he call Sea Foam."

Javan sat up, with a laugh, wondering how he could have missed so evident a conjecture. "And Sea Foam have one daughter," he added, unconsciously mimicking the heathen, "what he call Miss Red-Jones."

"That's right. Sea Foam call her Miss Red-Jones so nobody don't forget his grandpapa what got red hair."

"And Miss Tears?"

"Oh, she called Tears because everybody feel bad about Jonesy: they think he die at sea. . . ."

"Miss Red-Jones is going to be very angry to-night, oh yes," Benny put in, having caught the name "Red-Jones," and wishing to show off his English with a casual "Oh yes . . . there goes Toa with Miss Tern!"

XXIII

Miss Red-Jones on the Outer Beach

There she was, for all the world like Diana, or a vestal virgin, or Lucrece before Tarquin, straight as an arrow, her breasts jutting, Semitic and pure, the worst girl on Danger Island. Toa seemed anxious to show himself. He was not leading her modestly in the shadows of the pandanus trees, but was walking along the outer edge of the beach so as to pass within a yard of the three fishermen. Javan felt sure that he wished to be seen—that he hoped even Miss Red-Jones, from somewhere in the shore bush, would see the way he walked with his right arm around Miss Tern's waist, his face close to her hair. He did not speak to Javan, nor did Miss Tern. They walked past slowly, disappeared, and that is all.

Javan felt depressed; he was becoming concerned about his store-boy. Here the lad was, out with Miss Tern, the only girl who could arouse Miss Red-Jones's jealousy. Of course, Miss Red-Jones knew all about it; ten to one she was in the magnolia bushes watching them. Now what would she do? The situation had been bad enough after Toa's indiscretion in playing the part of the Prince; it had been much worse after giving the Fuji silk to Miss Tern—but then Javan had given her the silk. Oh, Lord! . . . good will . . . a business matter . . . an ill-advised gesture. Javan felt depressed. He dropped listlessly his fishing-line, stretched out on the sand and turned his eyes to the stars.

"There's Berenice's Hair low in the north-west, Benny," he said, "the stars you call The Tail of the Rat. After fourteen years of observation I have not been able to distinguish, in Coma Berenices, the slightest suggestion of a

rat's tail. And yet they say that primitive people have no imagination! And there's Spica's Spanker, just a little past the meridian, and the Black Magellanic Cloud by the Southern Cross, above the pandanus trees where the old men are making the night hideous. . . . Really, William, I think all that cawing is unnecessary. Were I a noddy tern, a few discreet caws in a soft and amorous tone would be much more effective. . . . I wonder what makes the Coal Sack so black? . . . But then it isn't really black; there are lots of stars in it."

"No, there ain't," William contradicted. "There's only one star, and that's the eye of The Little Fish of Kiri Welo."

"Kiri Welo? You showed me his bald head one night, in the Praecaepe Cluster. It's behind the horizon clouds now."

"Kiri Welo was a famous man," Benny said in the same matter-of-fact tone a professor of ancient history assumes to disguise his emotion when he mentions that Philip of Macedon was Alexander the Great's father.

"Kiri Welo was a famous man, but he couldn't catch a fish," William added.

"Not at first," Benny corrected him. "He tried every possible scheme to change his luck. He pulled the hair out of his head and then went fishing, but he never caught a thing. Then he slept in the mud of the taro swamp, and next morning fished for the little rock grouper any child can catch."

"No fish," William grunted.

"He even ate a lizard and then went fishing."

"No good. No fish."

"Then he slapped his wife and slept with her sister."

"Twins," William guffawed.

"Then he turned his canoe upside down and paddled it out in the lagoon to fish from its bottom; then he fixed a live rat on his hook and a shark carried away his line."

"Goddam fish no bite."

"Then he made a raft, anchored it at sea, and played a nose flute as he fished for whales. . . ."

"Then finally," William broke in loudly, "he circumcised himself and went out and caught a minnow!"

"That's right," Benny agreed, somewhat peeved that William had stolen the climax of his story. "He went out and caught a minnow; and he was so pleased that he flung it in the sky so that all men for ever might be reminded of how he had changed his luck. And there it is to this day, by the Southern Cross, The Little Fish of Kiri Welo!"

"Look behind you," William grunted, nudging Javan painfully.

But Javan did not turn his head for a full minute. He sensed who was passing, or rather he sensed that something which spelled disaster was moving ape-like along the sand. A man who has been through a ruinous fire will experience this same feeling of nameless dread after smelling a whiff of smoke. He is not conscious of the faint odour but only of fear, or sorrow, coming seemingly without cause. But presently Javan, with the forlorn hope that his dread may have had no objective origin, glanced up the beach.

It was he, right enough: not a modern Danger Islander, but the Terrible Old Man of the Palæolithic Age—the leader of the primal horde. Perhaps he had been evoked from the collective-unconscious mind; or perhaps a "now chip" on the River of Time had been stayed in its course for a few thousand years, then had drifted forward to pass through the third-dimensional net ages after its scheduled date.

From his waist up he was naked; his head was bare, save for his shaggy mat of unkempt hair; an old bandana handkerchief had been tied round his neck, and in one corner of it was knotted the mouth-organ. He trod the sand with a swinging movement, like a gorilla that has scented its mate somewhere far off in the jungle, and that follows the scent with rapid, but deliberate step.

"You savvy that feller?"

"Yes, William."

"Who is he?"

"He is the Terrible Old Man of the Palæolithic Age, William—the leader of the primal horde, extinct in civilised communities, but still treading the back alleys of the mind, the sands of remote atolls. He is the man who castrates his sons to keep them away from his women, who 'loves no one but himself, or other people only in so far as they serve his needs'; he is both the protector and the destroyer, feared in life, deified in death."

"It's Bones," William said.

"Aye, Bones, the leader of the primal horde. . . . Look, William, the Raven is sinking toward the western cloud rack where Kiri Welo's shiny head was snuffed out some time ago. . . . Let's not talk about Bones; unpleasant subjects disturb me. I know there's tragedy in the air, but it is not for me to meddle, and it does no good to worry. These islanders have been handling their Old Man for thousands of years; they will handle him to-night, with a club or a caress, laying him low in either eventuality. . . . Look at Spica's Spanker. How can the ancient Greeks have thought those stars looked like a raven? We sailors call them a spanker, and they *do* make a very shipshape one, but I can see no likeness to a bird. It is remarkable that the Greeks call them Corvus (the Raven), and the Polynesians call them Te Manu (The Bird)."

"It's not remarkable at all," William said. "How could anyone mistake them for a bird?" Then, pointing out eta and delta Corvi, "There's the head and beak to the northeast; and there's the back and tail feathers"—with a wave of his arm toward gamma, epsilon, and alpha, but not giving them their Greek letters—"and there's its feet in the star to the south-east"—beta Corvi.

"Oh, that's it! The Bird is not flying."

"How could it be flying if its wings aren't spread? And that dim star," the scandalous old heathen went on, point-

ing out the modestly dim zeta, "that's The Bird's egg-laying affair."

"I see, William!" Javan exclaimed. "You Danger Islanders, accepting in a scientific way the natural organs of birds, and feeling that it would be unscientific to omit any one of them from your constellations, have included in The Bird the ovulatory passage!"

Javan laughed moderately at his own whimsicality, sat upright, and picked up his line. The depression had left him.

"Why did you laugh?" Benny asked.

"White men think such things are funny," William replied for Javan. "They always laugh when you speak about them. I remember when I was on Captain Pester's ship. . . ."

"Yes, William; but there is no need to tell us. I am not at all to blame for the environment of my youth, and if it made me less clean-minded than you are, you must remember that a puritan cannot in a few years step into a state of purity."

He stretched out on the sand again, a trifle peeved with himself, and refused to notice it when a fish tugged at his line. William, however, noticed it immediately. Cursing unnecessarily, he pulled the fish in and killed it by crushing its head between his teeth. Then he rebaited the hook and threw it in the pool, while Javan let his thoughts wander, or rather forced them to wander—for he did not want to think about other things that were transpiring that night on the outer beach.

"One never hears among the Danger Islanders a story the humour of which is an allusion to sex," he thought. "Such a story is simply not funny to them. The legend of Kiri Welo does not amuse these people because it mentions an operation on the male genital, but because such an operation should have changed Kiri Welo's luck. Tell these people a Rabelaisian story and it will leave them cold. Try again: tell them one the 'humour' of which is

in naming, in the terminology of the vulgar, sexual love, and they will, perhaps, say it is a good thing or a pleasant way of propagating babies, but not a smirk will you get out of them. . . . Which reminds me that we white men in the South Seas, when speaking together in English and wishing to use some word that is considered indecent in our own language, almost invariably translate it into native. The associations, formed by the use of the native word, do not shock us, while we should have blushed had we said it in English. And is not this because we are prone to vilify certain parts of the body and their functions, while the Polynesians are too clean-minded to conceive of as vile what, for instance, Miss Tern and Toa may be enjoying at this very moment? There are things to be said for the primitive races—in spite of the missionaries' beliefs that they are depraved."

From far down the beach, somewhere in the magnolia bushes, came the sound of a mouth-organ.

William glanced toward Javan; Benny cleared his throat and started humming.

"Only one man can play a mouth-organ like that," William muttered.

The notes came in a grunted manner, as though someone were breathing at haphazard in and out the instrument, moving it betimes back and forth between his lips without any thought of harmony or melody. But there was rhythm of a strangely fascinating kind—a monotonous rhythm suggesting that the player was breathing in and out rapidly, with emotional intensity, as he accented strongly the first note of each phrase. One fancied it a primitive rhythm, such as the Reindeer Men may have beaten out on hollow trees. In the still night air, under the stars, with the wide expanse of black and empty ocean before him, Javan sensed that the notes were a symbolic expression of sexual love in its raw and unashamed form, exciting, fascinating, sinister, like the scent of a heated female to a rutting male.

They saw her then, of course, walking rapidly along the beach, half-way between them and the trees. Her body seemed tense, almost rigid, like that of a girl under hypnosis. She did not speak, nor even glance toward them. Within a moment she had merged in the darkness, and then, even while Javan's eyes were peering in the shadows, searching for her, trying to recall her, the mouth-organ was silenced.

"Finish, oh yes," William said, rising and coiling his line.

When Benny and Javan had pulled in their lines they followed the heathen down the wide avenue to the clearing where Jonesy's memory stone stands.

It was very still, and very lonely, and very dark in the clearing. They could scarcely see the memory stone, a misty shape, as they approached it. Jonesy's ghost, drifting past at sea to-night, would not be able to make it out. Alas! he would believe himself forgotten.

"They must have heard that I was out here," Benny grumbled as they left the clearing. Javan and William were aware that he had referred to the safety-match gamblers.

Faintly through the groves of the hernandia trees came again the grunted call of a mouth-organ.

PART TWO

XXIV

A Danger Island Festival for Business Purposes

On the morning of July the second Javan Moonlight and Mama tidied the living-quarters, brushed away the cobwebs, dusted the books, and hung wreaths of pandanus flowers on the framed portraits of Uncle Urban and Aunt Adelina; they spread the loudest of the patchwork quilts on the sleeping-mat, and piled one end of it high with kapok pillows quaintly embroidered and trimmed with lace, as plump and pretty as fat babies. Then Mama moved the table to the exact centre of the room and proceeded, with a deliberateness which would brook no interference, to make the final grand display—namely: to set the table for a dinner-party of twelve, using Mr. Moonlight's entire collection of silverware and crockery, wine glasses, tumblers, and beer mugs. And finally, in spite of her rheumatism, she made many trips to the store-room to bring up cases of tinned food, bottles of pickles, olive oil, vinegar, and Tabasco sauce; a ham, some packages of hops and others of crown caps, and an assortment of trade cutlery. All these she arranged with nice symmetry and graduation down the middle of the table.

Javan was not surprised, for Mama had undertaken this same labour of love each year on Christmas Day. "A little dinner-party, eh, Mama?" he ventured, when at last she had finished, and the table had assumed the precise dimensions of a rectangular pyramid, its walls embellished with frescoes of New Zealand oxen, Columbia River salmon, Monterey sardines, fruits suitable for the preparation of jam.

"Yes, Javan," she replied; then, with a pert toss of her

head: "And let me tell you one thing: there will not be a Danger Islander who can show such a beautiful dinner as this!"

Javan shook his head dubiously. "No roast pig," he said, "no fowls, no taro, no fish, no coconuts. . . ."

"Pig! Fowls! Taro! Fish! Coconuts!" Mama sniffled, shrugging contemptuously her bony shoulders. "Everybody will have such *food;* but no one will be able to show hundreds of shiny knives and forks, and both big spoons and little spoons; and as for tinned food, Parson Sea Foam will be the only one to show more than one tin of beef, and I think, Javan, that you must have several thousand!" (Mama's mathematics is elementary. Ten, one hundred, one thousand have for her equal value. To tell her that an airplane travels at two hundred miles an hour leaves her not so impressed as would a statement that it goes faster than a sailing canoe.) "And such beautiful pictures," she went on, turning to the framed portraits of Javan's uncle and aunt, "such beautiful pictures of elderly ladies and gentlemen with wreaths around their frames!"

"The wreaths are around the picture frames, Mama."

"Yes, Javan, just as I said. . . . Now, I think we had better go on the front balcony and wait for the Grand Parade. We will sit there, on the shady side, and maybe I'll be able to think of a little gossip for you."

When they were seated on the balcony, with their backs to the wall, Mama started in immediately, only pausing long enough to take a few quick, fortifying breaths. "Now, Javan," she said, "I did not mention it at breakfast, because you were so angry about the way I cooked the egg, but now I must tell you that last night, on the outer beach, Bones . . ."

"Woman," Javan interrupted her, "this is the Glorious Fourth—or rather it is the Glorious Second, which is sufficiently close for the purposes of rhetoric. You must try to concentrate your mind on nobler things. Let your thoughts dwell on how our forefathers fought and bled

to free us from the shackles of the redcoats and make the world safe for Democracy. How George Washington and John Brown and Bunker Hill stood on the banks of the Wabash, defying them, Mama, defying them! It is a glorious day. All over the world people are setting off firecrackers as an act symbolic of the roar of artillery and the volley of musketry! . . . And if you were going to tell me about Miss Tern and Toa, Miss Red-Jones and Bones, then save your breath: I myself saw them while I was struggling with the giant cavalla on the outer beach. You should know by this time that your employer is aware of what is happening on his own island."

Mama seemed both astonished and annoyed. Her scowl suggested that it had been unfair of Javan to anticipate her gossip. Then, brightening a little and smiling in her girlish way, she started telling him about it anyway. Javan, however, cut her short.

"I am concerned about Toa," he said. "Last night, after we had returned from fishing, I didn't sleep a wink, for constantly my mind reverted to the scene on the outer beach. I shall have to fire Toa, or marry Miss Tern, or something. . . . Look, Mama! There's Miss Tern now! She has bobbed her hair! Isn't it stunning! Doesn't bobbed hair look smart with her Semitic profile? It gives her an appearance of adolescence. I love bobbed hair with that classic type of beauty. Why don't you bob yours, Mama? Your hair looks like wet rope yarn. I wish you would bob it."

"Yes, Javan."

He turned quickly toward her. "No, Mama." he said hurriedly. "I was not serious. You had better not. It might look a little grotesque, considering that your profile isn't purely Semitic."

Just then a heavy step sounded on the balcony stairs, someone bellowed an allusion to Hell and the devil, and wanted to know where his old woman was, so he could baste her one. Presently the heathen stamped through

the house, made an ill-timed remark on the dinner display, then appeared on the front balcony. At a glance Javan saw that he had studiedly dressed so as to appear as filthy as possible. After the fishing of the night before he must have wallowed for a space in the taro swamps, then slept without bathing, so as to let the mud cake on him. This may be putting it somewhat hyperbolically, but none the less William was in no condition to celebrate with dignity the Grand Parade.

He asked for the Special No. IV the moment he had passed through the balcony doorway. Javan did not reply, but motioned him away from the clean mat, and said: "We were discussing Toa's love affair, William, before we were interrupted by Miss Tern and by you. It is difficult to understand how Toa and Miss Red-Jones can love promiscuously and not endanger their own mutual love; for the indiscretions of last night may have tragic consequences. But I fancy, William, that there is jealousy and hatred between Miss Red-Jones and Miss Tern. Miss Tern wants Toa for a husband: she is not the experimenting child that borrows a lad for a night and returns him undamaged. The same applies to Bones: love-making with him is perhaps too serious an affair for Toa's liking.

"There is jealousy and hatred between Miss Red-Jones and Miss Tern, while in the conventional promiscuity—where there is no thought of marriage or of stealing another person's sweetheart—hatred is absent though jealousy may appear in a mild form which stimulates more than deadens love. The promiscuous youths have not been parcelled out any more than the land has been parcelled out. The will to conquer and surpass is absent.

"Also, when Miss Red-Jones obeyed the mouth-organ call she did so expressly to injure Toa—or, rather, she allowed the fascination of a sinister adventure to control her because thus she could both enjoy a forbidden sin and punish her lover. The same punitive impulse dominated Toa when he went in the magnolia bushes with Miss Tern:

so it seems that with all of them, Bones excepted, there were vindictive motives such as are common to civilised people but are unworthy of savages. However, we will rest satisfied with knowing that Toa's love for Miss Red-Jones has not cooled, while Miss Red-Jones will do as she will do, as women have always done. God bless them!"

Again footsteps sounded on the balcony stairs; then Toa appeared, followed by The Name, who was limping on both legs because of a particularly painful outcrop of boils. Toa slumped down in one of the far corners of the balcony, rested his elbows and his chin on the railing, and stared into space. The Name eased with circumspection his skinny body close to William, but not too close, for the branch storekeeper was dressed in his white drill suit and cork helmet.

"These boils," he muttered, "they'll kill me some day. I've got four new ones, Javan, right where I sit down, so I have to sit like this, on the end of my spine, with my knees flexed. If it wasn't for my white drill suit I'd sit down among the ashes, like Job did. *'So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.'* "

"The Name," Javan said, "we were just speaking about your son's love affair so as to while away the time until the villagers arrive for the Grand Parade. Now, Toa's love for Miss Red-Jones. . . ."

"He doesn't love her at all," The Name snapped, the boils having put him in a bad humour.

"Yes, I do," came sullenly from Toa.

"Toa is going to marry elsewhere," The Name affirmed. "I have made all the arrangements. A fine girl, one of the best on the island. She is sure to give him many children; and she will not be a pauper like the parson's daughter. She has a chestful of muslin and calico dresses, as well as one of Fuji silk."

"So has Miss Red-Jones," Toa cried, without moving his chin from the railing.

"Yes; but with only five yards of cloth. Miss Tern's dress has at least *seven* yards, some say *eight!*"

"You mean," Javan growled, turning to eye The Name coldly, "that you want Toa to marry Miss Tern?"

"That's what I mean," came testily from the branch storekeeper. "He's going to marry her right away, as soon as this unfair Fourth of July celebration is over."

"If Toa marries Miss Tern," Javan said in a detached but ominous tone, his eyes again fixed on the tall coconut-trees beyond the schoolhouse, "I'll close your store."

"Eh!" The Name exclaimed. "Why should *you* care?"

"Because I am going to marry her myself! That bobbed hair has determined me. . . . Was her hair bobbed last night, Toa?"

Javan loves dramatic effects. There was one at that instant. Everybody started talking at once.

"Don't marry her!" Toa cried. "She'll kill you!"

"Marry? You? Miss Tern?"

"How lovely!" Mama exclaimed. "I'll wear my black lawn dress, and Miss Tern can carry my blue silk parasol when she walks to church with you! Oh, Javan! and I'll bob my hair, too, no matter what Parson Sea Foam says! Will it look nice bobbed?"

William laughed with short intakes of breath. "Marry! Damn! Oh, Goddamn!" he roared. "Whas a matta? You gonna marry Miss Little Sea ten year ago! Then you gonna marry her sister! Then you gonna marry the Manihiki girl off the ship! Oh, Hell 'nd damn!"

"Yes, that's right," Mama chirped in, taking up the insult, for the stupid woman understands much of William's choice English. "And he was going to marry Miss Desire, and he almost did, too!"

"And he gonna marry Miss Legs!" William roared, seemingly unaware that the pleasantry had gone far

enough. "Oh, that son of a gun he too much gonna marry all the time, oh yes, bloody Hell!"

William's insulting reflection almost made Javan marry Miss Tern that very day. However, after telling the heathen that he could go, and that he need not come back to the trading station again—instructions which William ignored—he sent Toa for a bottle of the Special No. IV, and, drinking it alone, scowled in turn at each of his visitors. After a few moments of calm reflection he made, as usual, a wise decision. The climate in the tropics is enervating; a white man should relax; Miss Tern would be disturbing—particularly so now that she had bobbed her hair—she might insist on talking to him before coffee, or describing her reactions to the dawn; or she might have ideas about shaving, or keeping a mat on the counter, or the alcoholic content of brew, or relaxation. One never can tell what these women will get into their heads. And anyway, Javan had spoken of marrying Miss Tern only so as to simplify matters for Toa. Then there was Miss Tears. It was much more pleasant to anticipate marrying Miss Tears. However, it turned out that just then Mama jumped nimbly to her feet, gasped, "They're coming!" and hurried through the house and down the balcony steps. Toa, The Name, William, and Javan turned to watch the Grand Parade.

XXV

The Grand Parade

Parson Sea Foam led them, perspiring in the black woollen suit Javan had bought for him in North America, his bandmaster cap scarcely covering the bald spot, his celluloid collar soiled but shiny, his black bow-tie set impertinently askew. Behind him came the abundant Mrs. Sea Foam, her brow clouded as befits a parson's wife. Behind Mrs. Sea Foam, Miss Tears tripped along gracefully, her slim body clothed snugly in three yards of Fuji silk; and following her came Miss Red-Jones, clothed in five yards of Fuji silk. But Miss Red-Jones seemed sullen. Javan fancied that she regretted having put on the silk dress, for, the very next one in line, the shameless vampire, her body straight, her breasts jutting, her Hebrew features as chaste as though she had not been on the outer beach with Toa the night before, Miss Tern walked demurely behind Miss Red-Jones, her lovely body clothed in seven yards of Fuji silk! There was not a person in the Grand Parade but knew that Miss Red-Jones's dress had been made from only five yards of silk, while Miss Tern's had been made from seven (or even eight) yards; and in their dark minds Toa's love was measured by the amount of material in the girls' dresses.

The villagers made a fine sight, passing slowly along the road, the women, for the most part, dressed in red muslin, white lawn, and blue voile (at one shilling and sixpence a yard); the men in khaki trousers and red-striped singlets, white trousers and blue singlets, blue trousers and white singlets (at eight shillings a man). A picture handkerchief was tied around every neck; the children, gorgeously dressed at four shillings each, sucked

lollipops as they set off firecrackers under the heels of the older folks. And how well the Swiss embroidery looked when used as lace on the collars and sleeves of the dresses! . . . three hundred and seventy-eight yards at sixpence, cost twopence, two hundred per cent profit . . . and so Javan's thoughts wandered as the promenaders left the road to file through Bones's house—in by the front door and out by the back—like a long and gaily coloured Chinese dragon; then around the back of Bones's house, to pass between it and Breadfruit's little shack; then in by the front door of Deacon Yam's house and out by the back door; then a figure eight between this last house and Sun-Eater's coral-lime place, and so on until the dragon's head had reached the trading station, while its body was still winding in and out between the houses—winding, convoluting, a section of it disappearing behind one house to reappear out of the front door of another, like a serpent slithering through a field of stubble corn; and the line itself broken, farther down the road, by the groves of coconut-trees till only stripes of red, white, and blue could be seen; and then even these patches of colour lost behind a copse of pandanus-trees, till only twelve or thirteen stars spangled the banner of deep-green foliage.

Javan entered the house just as the dragon's head, in the person of Sea Foam, stumped through the back balcony doorway. The parson gave Javan an oily smile, clucked, took off his cap, and, "Ah, Brother Javan," he said, "I am glad to see that you have entered into the spirit of the Glorious Fourth of July. This is the anniversary of the day when the King of England declared his country free of the American yoke . . .*'and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright'* (Leviticus xxvi, 13). . . . Many died on this day that the True Faith could be brought to the isles of the heathen. . . . *'and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen'* (Zephaniah ii, 11)."

Sea Foam dug his hand in his trousers pocket, brought

out a penny and laid it on the table. "Just a little remembrance of the Day of Our Lord," he murmured, and moved on to the balcony.

One by one the rest of the villagers filed through the house. George tramped in to deliver a short address on the deeper significance of the Glorious Fourth. He dwelt for a moment on the Three Wise Men—in the excitement of the moment having confused the day with Christmas—likened himself to them, laid a box of matches beside Sea Foam's penny, and tramped out.

Mama entered in due time, for she had left the balcony only in order to join the procession and have the pleasure of entering with the neighbours the house she had helped to decorate. She presented Javan with a baked taro wrapped in a banana leaf.

Constable Benny, his trench helmet studiedly askew, gave Javan a conch shell, then hurried away so as to be on hand should any traffic congestion occur. Chief of Police Ura gave nothing, but accepted a tin of beef as the perquisite of the Force. Deacon Bribery presented a box of matches (half-exhausted), and Witch Doctor Pau, accompanied by Mortician Bosun-woman, gave his white colleague a bottle of coconut oil that, he claimed, had powerful therapeutic virtues. In a half-hour the tip of the serpent's tail, personified by the village idiot, had whipped through the house, but, like dust raised by the serpent, scores of Javan's minor retainers—namely, the toddlers of Danger Island—then clambered up the balcony steps and shinnied up the posts. There were no speeches on the Glorious Fourth, Christmas, or Saint Patrick's Day, but there were yells of "Lollipop!" "Beef!" "Biscuit!"—food for the friends of Mr. Moonlight. They made short work of the dinner display, as they were expected to, for all have been reckoned in the inevitable expenditure for the Glorious Fourth. To-morrow, wearing the white cap of the dispensary, Javan would be waiting for those who had dined too well.

When the last toddler had staggered out of the station, Javan, Toa, The Name, and William left to join the Grand Parade. They caught up with the rest of the villagers at Sea Foam's house.

The parson's collection of European food made an impressive display on the twelve-foot table. Tins of Norwegian sardines garnished a platter holding a huge roast pig. There were jars of olives and tins of tripe that had been in the parson's house for untold years and were kept only for purposes of display, for even Sea Foam knew that it would be sure death to sample them. In fact, when that morning he had carried them from the cupboard to the table he had done so with caution, remembering vividly the time when a bottle of tomato sauce had exploded in his hands. On one corner of the table was a tin of New Zealand butter that, growing rotund with the years, had developed into a perfect spheroid. Javan shuddered when he glanced at it, and moved quickly away. On another corner of the table was a tin of "pâté nufsed" and a package of sodium bicarbonate. The pâté may have been left by Jonesy, for it was so old the label was scarcely legible; the sodium bicarbonate was there, presumably, to give immediate relief to anyone reckless enough to eat the pâté. Also, there were dozens of great *puraka* puddings, taro greens baked with octopus tentacles, a fifty-pound albacore, shell-fish, an assortment sea crabs, lobsters, and coconut crabs. The native food had been prepared only for the purpose of nutriment; the European food was there for splendour. The neighbours, admiring this feast, would exclaim that surely a man who could make such a display was worthy to preach the Gospel on Danger Island.

On leaving Sea Foam's house the parade followed the lagoon beach to the causeway, and there, by necessity forming in a straight though polychromatic column, crossed to Leeward Village. Javan always admires the procession of well-dressed Danger Islanders crossing the cause-

way which separates the main body of the islet from the Point of Yato. On an atoll one is seated with the predominance of blues and greens; but at a time like the present, with a long file of colorific dresses, singlets, picture handkerchiefs moving slowly, bobbing gently with the bombastic steps of the villagers, the blue of the lagoon and the sky and the green of the islet are contrasted gratifyingly. There was Chief of Police Ura, his admiral's epaulettes spots of vivid red and gold against the sombre background of coconut-trees; and Constable Benny, his trench helmet aflame in the vertical light of high noon; and Mama, her blue silk parasol reminiscent of Oriental pavilions; and the Misses Tern, Tears, and Red-Jones, their gowns of striped Fuji silk as splendiferous as the dawn; and the mass of villagers, their red, white, and blue costumes scintillating as brightly as the silver shillings they had laid down to purchase them.

Only Letter, the village idiot, introduced into the spectacle a discordant element. He was in his church clothes, starting at the top with a home-made cap that resembled a Turkish fez, then a sky-blue shirt on which he had sewn innumerable bits of coloured cloth in hearts, diamonds, half-moons, bifurcated lines, and cuneiform symbols, Farther down, the idiot's spindle legs were clothed in red calico breeches, on which, here and there at random, had been sewn some score of pockets: one for his marbles and one for his pipe, one for his matches and one for his popgun. Some of the villagers thought that Letter's antics were amusing. He had entered, in his own foolish way, into the spirit of the Glorious Fourth. Every few steps he would stop and, spreading his legs wide apart and outstretching his arms, would knock his knees together, roll his eyes, dance the most obscene of hulas as betimes he made distracting wä-wä noises.

Directly in front of Javan were Deacons Yam and Arrowroot, the Danger Island hypochondriacs, haunting figures of the dispensary. Well past seventy, the former

tall and slim, the latter short and fat, they are always together, and they bring to mind the inevitable comradeship one finds between stout men and thin men.

"It is a glorious Christmas, Friend Arrowroot," Javan heard Yam grumble as they crossed the causeway.

"Aye, Friend Yam, a glorious Day of Birth," the other replied. "And how are your feet to-day?"

"Not too well," Arrowroot sighed. "And your stomach, Friend Yam: I hope your stomach is better to-day."

"No; it is paining as usual, day and night."

Arrowroot shook his head with an expression of genuine sympathy. "It must be terrible," he muttered. "And my feet: last night when I went out with the bird-netters I had to walk on tiptoe. The soles of my feet are worn as thin as a pandanus leaf. It pains me even to walk along the causeway."

"The sorrow!" Yam cried, wagging his head. "It must be terrible, my friend, terrible! And my stomach: last night, after I had eaten those noddy terns you sent me, I had the most excruciating pains right from here"—pointing to a spot below his Adam's apple—"to here"—as his finger drew a line to his lower abdomen.

"My friend, my friend!" Arrowroot cried. "And to think that I caused you all that pain! I can never forgive myself. Now, the soles of my feet . . ."

Arriving at Leeward Village, Javan passed with the parade through all the houses, and in each one he admired the display of worldly goods. Deacon Bribery, who had hurried to the head of the parade as it approached his house, was at his doorway when the neighbours filed in. He took particular pains to point out personally to Javan some of the more valuable of his possessions. There was a great patchwork quilt hung like a tapestry against one wall; there was a table covered with oilcloth, and on it the inevitable roast pig, taro puddings, flying fish, and noddy terns, now somewhat stale after a day in the tropic heat; and, most spectacular of all, there was an enlarged,

framed photograph of Deacon Bribery's son, hung against the patchwork quilt. The deacon explained that his son had been in Rarotonga at the beginning of the World War, and had been sent to France, with three other Danger Islanders, to serve and die for his country while working as a St. Nazaire stevedore. But the photograph tells another story, for in it, under the legend "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," Bribery Junior stands in a frightfully tight uniform, with a sword at one hip, an automatic at the other, while in his hands, in the position of parade rest, is an army rifle. There are many decorations on his chest, epaulettes on his shoulders, chevrons on his arms, a trench helmet on his head.

And the background! The deacon waved his arms excitedly when he called Javan's attention to a terrific battle scene, with poilus clambering out of the trenches, barbed-wire entanglements hung with dead men like washing on a line, shrapnel bursting overhead, airplanes swooping down from the clouds, Germans biting the dust, hand grenades and whizzbangs exploding on all sides, machine-guns and cannons belching fire and destruction. But Bribery Junior stands calmly in the midst of this horror, his face impassive, his rifle at parade rest—for mayhap he is thinking of the romantic château the artist has drawn in the lower left-hand corner of the picture: he is thinking of the brave poilu who stands before the château, a French maiden in his arms.

"You see," Deacon Bribery cried, pointing to the lovers, "that's how my son amused himself after the battles!"

Half-way through the village the procession found King-of-the-Sky and his son, The Bird, awaiting them, seated by a table on their veranda, the Sky King dressed in his billiard-table green suit, The Bird in his cowboy pants with pockets both in front and behind. Between them was a complete coffee-set (salvaged from a wrecked missionary ship) and a number of tumblers painted with flowers and flags, and with inscriptions such as "Hands

Across the Sea," "Forget Me Not," "Gage d'amour."

As the paraders approached the house King-of-the-Sky poured a cup of coffee, handed it to his son, then poured one for himself. They added sugar, stirred the coffee and sipped it, entirely oblivious of the neighbours who were now crowding about the veranda. Then, abruptly, the Sky King raised his beetling brows in mild surprise, glanced this way and that, and, rising magnificently, "Ah, my neighbours!" he cried. "Come in. You are just in time to join The Bird and me in a cup of coffee. Come, Javan, Ura, Benny, a cup of coffee to strengthen you on the way."

"Yes; have some coffee!" The Bird shouted. "We always make more than we can drink, being rich people who don't have to worry about expense."

Ura, Benny, and Javan sat at the table to drink coffee, while the rest of the villagers filed through the house, all sufficiently astonished at the Sky King's nonchalance in the midst of wealth.

Next, the procession crossed the road to George's place, Toa's bosom friend was at his doorway. He greeted the villagers with his usual magnanimity; and, as they passed through the house, he paced back and forth, parallel with the line of paraders, looking neither to right nor left, his face streaming with perspiration, his shoes squeaking grandly as he delivered a little address on the meaning of the Fourth of July. The part that Javan heard went something like this:

"On days of great rejoicing it is customary for my neighbours to visit each other's homes. Therefore, most of my neighbours beautify their simple cottages and cover their eating mats with food. But I do nothing of the kind, for it is well known that I am the richest man on the island, owning an army overcoat and many other things of great value. During holidays I modestly await the villagers without having made any attempt to cook more than my usual simple meal. . . ."

George rambled on until the last of the neighbours had passed through the front doorway and out the back; then he returned his finery to its camphorwood chest and rejoined the parade.

It was late when the promenaders had examined the last house and had formed in groups on the western beach. The sun was setting; the wind had died down to a faint breeze, and now the stretch of shallow water from the beach to the reef gleamed with the gold of the sun.

Javan turned to glance at the groups of villagers. They seemed very still, expectant. They fidgeted, glanced uneasily up at the coconut-trees or out across the shallows. Then Javan understood. They were to have the little scene, of course; for there, under a pandanus-tree on the edge of the beach, sat Bosun-woman, as repulsive and ghoulish as ever. Twenty feet from her squatted Mrs. The Name, fat and scowling, her back to a coconut-tree, glaring at the witch doctor's wife.

Parson Sea Foam approached Javan. He shook his head sadly. "At every celebration it is the same," he said. "I have remonstrated; I have preached a sermon against it; I have cast them from the church—but it does no good." He turned to the villagers. "Come," he shouted, "let us return to our homes, for to-morrow we will have the big day of the drama, and we must rest."

No one moved. Several moments of tense silence followed. Then, suddenly, the piercing voice of Bosun-woman, screeching: "Life to you, Mrs. The Name, on this, the Glorious Fourth of July!"

Another tense silence; then The Name's wife, screaming back: "And life to *you,* Bosun-woman, on this, the Glorious Fourth of July!" A malicious laugh came from her; then she shrieked: "Old crooked fingers! Still alive in spite of your sins?"

"Squint eyes!" screamed the other, with equal venom, and then they went to it, tooth and nail, flinging vituperation at one another.

Javan turned sadly away. He had seen the last show of the day—the two bitter enemies of Danger Island exchanging greetings. It is an age-old feud; even they themselves have forgotten its origin; but at each festival they are at some place where the people will congregate, waiting at a strategic stop where they will be sure of an audience.

It was dusk when the villagers filed back across the causeway. Again Javan found himself behind Yam and Arrowroot.

"Well, well, my friend," Javan heard Arrowroot say, "we have lived to see another King's birthday."

"Aye," Yam replied; "but it is terrible to live when one suffers so much. . . . But is not this the Day of Christ's Birth?"

"It may be, Friend Yam, it may be. One forgets such things when the soles of one's feet are so thin."

"Aye; I'm sure I don't know. Perhaps it is the Day of the New Year. A great day, nevertheless."

"Aye, a great day," Javan Moonlight thought. He smiled wearily as he moved off the causeway to the village road. It was quite dark under the trees; even the colour of Letter's trousers was scarcely discernible as he danced and wä-wä-ed in and out the line. "A great day. Very profitable. I deserve a long rest. I shall relax."

XXVI

Occurrences in the Churchyard of the Missionary Society

On Danger Island hurry does not fit in the cultural pattern of the fine arts: when one devotes a day to the drama one does so leisurely. Sitting in the shelters on three sides of the churchyard, the villagers breakfasted on the remnants of the feasts of the day before, drank the water from young coconuts, and discussed everything except the coming drama. Javan occupied with Parson Sea Foam and his family the little bell-house near the churchyard gate.

A table was spread with food from Sea Foam's cookhouse. By intermittent nibbling they extended their breakfast to lunch and dinner, refreshing themselves at times with cups of tea brewed by Mama, stopping the meal to gesticulate with a thigh bone when some happy thought had come to them, or to punctuate their ideas by rapping on the table with the drumstick of a fowl, or to drive home their statements by prodding with a lobster's claw one of the great taro puddings Mrs. Sea Foam had prepared.

Directly in front of them, fifty yards across the churchyard, the Missionary Society's great building stood as ugly and useless as an over-sized packing-case—but a packing-case might contain something of value: this church was more of a mausoleum for a religion which is a disgrace to the refined ethics and mysticism of modern Christianity. In this church, where once a month Sea Foam cries the magical words: "We will now eat the body and drink the blood of Jesus!"—words suggestive of the cannibal who eats the eyes of his enemy to acquire his

enemy's vision—in this church is preached the gospel of an Old Testament Jehovah, a horned Satan, a fiery Hell, a Heaven in the sky where there is much harping and much adoration of "a rather handsome old gentleman with a long beard, sitting on a cloud." In a word, a religion which our great-grandparents were beginning to treat with contempt.

Formerly, Javan attended the services with some regularity. Sunday after Sunday he heard expounded the gospel of original sin and infant damnation, the legends of Jonah and the whale, Lot and his two daughters, Daniel and the lions, these subjects fascinating the neighbours, even as the stories in the *Arabian Nights* fascinate Javan; and if the parson took a text from the New Testament it would be about the loaves and fishes, Jesus walking on the water, or some such tale of the marvellous. After such a sermon the congregation would mutter: "Kua umeré!" (It is astonishing!), and, as they returned to their homes, they would transfer their astonishment at a marvellous tale to conviction that the God of John Wesley is the True God. How often this form of stupidity is evinced even in civilised society, as when a person says: "I know Doctor X will cure you: he is such a nice man."

Javan Moonlight is more of a Buddhist than a Christian. The teachings of Gautama Siddhartha all but convince him. However, he will admit that his religion is absurd, but will add that all religions are absurd if analysed, and that no religion should be analysed. Then perhaps he will quote one of his favourite authors, Vilfredo Pareto, who claims: "It is . . . a serious mistake to measure the social value of a religion strictly by the logical or rational value of its theology." And finally he may point out that, when scarcely two men can be found who will agree on any subject, a man has a right to devise for himself an art of living and a system of ethics.

"Sea Foam," he said, after helping Miss Tears to a lobster, and noting how charming she was in her dress

of Fuji silk, "the first missionaries came to the South Seas shouting, figuratively, 'We shall force Christianity down your throats if we kill you in the attempt!' They preached, under the protection of His Majesty's gunboats: 'You shall kneel to our God! Your idols shall be destroyed! You shall worship as we worship! This is a war to force you to accept Jehovah, not an offer which you may accept or reject!' As often before—during the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Spanish Conquests—the gentle teachings of Christ were offered to the heathen with threats of vengeance if rejected. You remember, Sea Foam, when the famous missionary, John Williams, first stopped at Mangaia?"

Sea Foam clucked his tongue against the roof of his mouth in intimation that he wished to ponder his reply. This sound is supposed to be similar enough to speech to prohibit a polite person from interrupting. Presently, the clucking having stopped, he started to gesture, an act which helps him glean the thoughts which are scattered about his brain. It is always an abrupt, dexterous movement, mechanically the same of that of a woman brushing crumbs from the dining-room table. After figuratively brushing the table for some time a smile appeared on the worthy parson's lips—a supercilious "universal" smile, such as a village preacher resorts to when finding himself outwitted by the local atheist. Then:

"Yes," he replied. "He sent two Tahitian preachers and their wives ashore. The men were beaten, the women were raped, and all of them were chased back aboard the Reverend Williams's ship."

"And two pigs were landed," Javan added. "They brought dysentery to the island, thereby killing about half the population. Let me quote the Reverend Williams's own account, Sea Foam: I believe I can do so without error:

" 'Soon after our visit a disease broke out which was exceedingly fatal; the infant and the aged, the chieftain

and the peasant, fell alike beneath its deadly influence. Ascribing the calamitous visitation to the God of the strangers, whom they had ill-treated, they collected all the property they had taken from them, and cast it in an immense cavern in one of the mountains; making a vow to the God of the strangers, that if He would suspend the execution of His vengeance, and conduct His worshippers again to the island, they would receive them kindly, and give them food to eat.' "

"Yes, Brother Javan. . . . The actors are all here. I shall pray, and then we will watch these worldly dramas which you have taught the people."

Rising and removing his cap, Sea Foam stumped to the middle of the churchyard. "Make the coconut-trees heavy with nuts, oh Lord!" he prayed, incidentally repeating, almost word for word, one of the ancient prayers to the heathen goddess Taua. "Make the taro roots large and the fish plentiful." But Javan's mind was on the Reverend John Williams and the dysentery the two pigs had brought to Mangaia. He recalled how Williams had returned to the island, and how this time the people had received him kindly and given him food to eat. As to the pestilence that killed off the people, he blandly relates:

"Thus again we had the pleasing task of recognising the timely interposition of an all-wise and overruling Providence, adapting the means He employs to the circumstances of the people whose minds are to be influenced. And it must be allowed that the event just narrated was calculated to produce as powerful an impression on the minds of such people, as if they had been eye-witnesses to a miraculous display of Divine power. . . ."

While Sea Foam continued his prayer Javan recalled the Reverend W. W. Gill's comment on John Williams's second visit to Mangaia:

". . . Mr. Williams left behind him a valuable souvenir in the shape of a couple of pigs . . . but soon dysentery decimated the population . . . When the missionaries returned a feast was prepared for them, and they were questioned about the new god. . . .

After a pause they (the Mangaians) inquired:

" 'Has God a wife?'—'No.'

" 'Whence, then, came mankind?'—'Out of the earth fashioned by God. He breathed into him, and he became a living man such as we are.'

"At this the crowd laughed outright, for in their dark minds this account of the creation of man seemed absurd. They loudly exclaimed, 'You are liars!' The teachers persisted that they only spoke the truth.

" 'What was the name of the man who was made?'—'Adam: we are all his children.'

" 'Had Adam a wife?'—'Yes.'

" 'Who were her parents?'—'She had none.'

"Then how did she come into existence?'—'She was formed out of Adam; a rib was taken from his side, and made by God into a woman.'

"The heathen multitude laughed immoderately at this, and wanted to know whether Adam was much hurt. . . ."

"Well, Sea Foam, I see you have finished your prayer to the Divine Providence who brings His first principles of biology to the heathen with fire, sword, and disease. It seems that He is the same remorseless God He was in the Old Testament. Don't you think that He demonstrated His aversion to missionary work when He allowed the Papuan cannibals to eat John Williams? But then Jehovah has always been cruel to His own chosen people. There must be some reason for this. . . ."

"I note, Brother Javan," Sea Foam broke in, his lips stretched in a smile fully as long as the smile that creased his double chin, "that you have made immense profit from

clothing the people for this Fourth of July celebration. Your business has improved, and I have decided that it will improve still more. *'Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver'* (Job xxii, 24–25)."

Sea Foam is never at a loss for a text—many texts—though often his choice is not a happy one. If it is a feast, a sin, a promise of felicity which he wishes to illustrate, his mind seems as exhaustive as a concordance. It is thus with all Polynesian preachers, and so far as that goes with all Polynesians. Their memories have not been atrophied by dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and other reference books which obviate the necessity to retain knowledge.

"The Reverend Johns said when last he was here that all the children must start wearing clothes, and so I have decided to preach about the shame of nakedness. *'And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakednss; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach'* (Exodus xxviii, 42). When they hear this sermon the fathers and mothers will hurry to your trading station and buy clothes for their children. There is to be no more nakedness on Danger Island. It is indecent. The Reverend Johns said so. *'I counsel of thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear'* (Revelations iii, 18)."

"I understand there was some shameful nakedness the night Miss Red-Jones was made into a woman," Javan said maliciously.

"Yes, yes, nakedness," Sea Foam muttered, as though the matter had just entered his mind. "But then we must remember, Brother Javan, that naked we came out of the womb. *'And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed'* (Genesis ii, 25). But then, on the other hand, the Reverend Johns says that there must be no more nakedness. *'And Shem and Japheth took a garment,*

and laid it upon their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward—because they were ashamed, and they saw not their father's nakedness' (Genesis ix, 23). You see, Brother Javan, Shem and Japheth were ashamed to look on their father's nakedness, but these sinful Danger Islanders look on nakedness without even thinking about it. They must learn to be ashamed, like Shem and Japheth; then they will go to your trading station and buy clothes, and you will make so much money that you will not refuse me a higher rent.

"They are playing *Cinderella* now," Javan said loudly, turning his attention to the American millionaire, who was trying, in spite of his boils, to dance with Cinderella. "Note, Sea Foam, the entire lack of suppression. Even your religion has not effectively dampened the spirits of the guests at the Prince's ball. Look at Miss Tern dancing with The Name—dancing without a blush, a smirk, or a snicker, and this in spite of the occurrences on the outer beach two nights ago."

"It is very sinful to dance in the churchyard," Sea Foam growled.

"And there's Deacon Bribery, kicking up his heels and dancing with all his might, like David before the Lord (11 Samuel vi, 14). The police force are whooping as they improvise steps previously unknown to Terpsichore; and I see that the hefty Mrs. Sea Foam is tripping hither and thither, like the daughter of Herodias, while Miss Red-Jones is flirting with Bones as flagrantly as Delilah flirted with Samson, and for much the same reason; and our excellent mortician, Bosun-woman, is demonstrating her individuality, like the soldier boy who was the only one in step in the parade, by doing a waltz to one-step time. There is no suppression here, and it is because these people were not suppressed in childhood. Thank the heathen gods for the outer beach! Even your religion has not trammelled the free spirits of the Danger Islanders!"

"They're all sinners," Sea Foam said.

Just then Javan was silenced by a more than usually stormy cloud on Sea Foam's brow. He glanced across the churchyard to see The Bird (as Ali Baba) leading his cowboys (the forty thieves) in a charge toward the Leeward Village shelter (the cave).

"I take it," Javan said, "that Ali Baba has become the leader of the forty thieves. A good idea. Only a highly imaginative people can improve on the story of Ali Baba. This alteration adds force to the play, for evil, as I have always said, is a positive quality, while goodness is only the negative result of combating evil.

"Speaking of the culture of these people, I once made a study of Polynesian astronomy, particularly in its relation to the courses the early navigators set by the stars when voyaging across the Pacific. When I was told that by steering toward Alpha Centauri, when that star was low to westward, a canoe would fetch up at Niue, I worked out the problem, and found that the star-course was correct. However, I wondered how the first voyager had decided on his course. On asking my informants they replied: "The god of the voyager piloted his canoe.' This was a remarkable statement to come from a Wesleyan Christian. On questioning further I discovered that even to-day the Danger Islanders believe in the existence of their old gods; moreover, they believe these gods actually *did* show the voyagers the sea lanes between islands. But though they believe in their old gods they admit that the new god is more powerful."

"They were false gods," Sea Foam muttered. Then again his brow clouded, and he pointed an accusing finger at the actors.

This time Javan saw Ali Baba and the forty thieves grouped around a number of brew bottles. "It appears," Javan said, "that the forty thieves are about to hide in the empty oil jars. The jars are a trifle small, but I suppose the actors will make some sort of symbolic representation."

"No; that's not it," Sea Foam growled. "They left out that part. They are going to have a big feast to celebrate the theft of all those bags of money; and they are going to drink wine at the feast, and pretend they are drunken cowboys. . . . I shall stop it!"

The parson had started to rise when Javan hurtled him back in his chair with a sharp: "If you stop them I'll reduce the rent!" Then he went on, loudly and rapidly; "I have been thinking about the early South Sea missionaries. They made a great fanfaronade over the success of their enterprise, but the fact remains that the introduction of Jehovah was a simple matter, because it was in keeping with the religious culture of the people. Let us try to double back to the old days and fancy ourselves living on an island still undiscovered by white men. We need not depart from history to do this."

Here Javan paused to collect his thoughts, but he was disturbed immediately by Miss Tears, asking: "How much money do cowboys make, Javan?"

"About four pounds a month, my dear."

"Oh! So much?"

"They make much more," Sea Foam broke in, in better humour now. "When they steal banks and kidnap the daughters of millionaires they make thousands of pounds. Fine business, cowboy!"

"How wonderful cowboys must be! Look, Javan"—as she pointed to the actors yelling, dancing, and guzzling—"They're so happy! Even old Yam and Arrowroot are doing some kind of a funny dance among the tombstones!"

"Scarcely more than two hundred years ago," Javan said, "your ancestors, Sea Foam, were sailing the Pacific in double canoes, from island to island in jumps of a few hundred to a few thousand miles. They had no iron, their weapons and utensils being made from wood, coral, and stone; but they had textiles, and feather garments similar to those worn by the Aztecs at the time of Cortez. They had a knowledge of the stars, the sun's ecliptic, planetary

movement; they knew of the existence of Mercury and called it 'Friend of the Sun,' and they had discovered that stars of low southern declination change their bearing from east to west in the upper transit, from west to east in the lower transit. They had a pantheon of gods both benignant and malevolent, some of whom they feared, some ridiculed, some venerated.

"To-day this culture is lost; but in place of it the people have learned to make copra, smoke cigarettes, and expound the Old Testament."

"If I could only make the children wear clothes," Sea Foam muttered, his head nodding.

"One of the canoe-loads of voyagers discovered Danger Island. They decided to settle, so taking their gods ashore they established them in an enclosed place which they called the Sacred Place of Matala. This done, they planted the food-bearing plants, trees, and seeds they had brought; they built houses and canoes, chose a priest, and a king, formed an independent community. Within a few generations other lands became to them as fabulous as was Atlantis to the Ancient Greeks. When at long separated intervals voyagers came from other lands they were met with fear or veneration, and were clubbed or worshipped.

"Now let us fancy ourselves on the island in the year 1700. For twenty years no strangers have appeared from over the horizon. Life is becoming stagnant; the outside world is more than ever a myth. Some of the adventurous young men speak of sailing away to search for new and richer islands. The priests are losing their power; the gods are sinking into disrepute. Even the high priest is obliged to admit that the goddess Taua did not bring luck during the last flying-fish season, that the god Matariki did not calm the storm that swept over the island during the last hurricane season.

"Then one day there is excitement in the villages. A sail has been sighted! Men, women, children rush shouting to the outer beach, and from there they see, far across

the lonely and mysterious ocean, the sail of a double canoe blocking out a brown triangle against the horizon clouds. The hull appears, a score of figures are seen, the canoe rides the combers over the reef, the strangers leap ashore, ready to fight or embrace. They are welcomed.

"For many days there is feasting and dancing. Very soon the strangers are able to talk with the Danger Islanders, for all the Polynesian tongues are closely related. They teach the Danger Islanders improved methods of binding cross-booms to canoes, lashing Tridacna-shell adzes to their helves; they teach them new games, songs, dances. Then comes the story-telling. No doubt the strangers tell long yarns. Their voyage has been an Odyssey. They have encountered sea monsters; they have landed on remote islands; they have fought against an enemy of giants, one thousand to one. And always, when they are asked: 'How did you find your way across the sea?' or 'How did you vanquish your enemies?' the strangers have replied: 'Our god showed us the way,' or, 'Our god made our arms strong in battle.' And when asked the name of their god, they reply, perhaps, that he is Tané-of-the-Sea, whose principal is enclosed in a roll of sennit. The Danger Islanders are convinced that Tané-of-the-Sea—of whom they know in legend—is a powerful god, so, accustomed as they are to many gods, they do not hesitate to add the new one, even to make him the supreme god.

"Years later another canoe arrives, bringing another god, this one having aided the voyagers in even greater enterprises; and so on and on, new gods being added to the pantheon while old ones fall into disrepute and are forgotten.

"Then one day the excitement in the village is greater than ever it has been before. No double canoe this time but a ship! The people are both amazed and terrified. Imagine, Sea Foam, an intermundane flying machine from Mars appearing over New York City, with flashings of lightning and mighty thunderings. The amazement and

consternation would be no greater than that caused by the first ship off Danger Island. And fancy the stupefaction when the vessel is along the reef, its brass cannon belches smoke, fire, and an awful noise, when the missionaries have come ashore, their strange clothes have been examined, their white skin marvelled at; and when they have landed pigs, and fowls, and dogs—monsters never before dreamed of! And picture the little group of missionaries gathered round a foot-pedal organ on the outer beach by Leeward Village, raising their voices in hymns and loud hosannas.

"Need more be said? The missionaries always had Polynesian interpreters with them; and we know by their own records that when the natives asked: 'From whence come these marvels? Who taught you to build such gigantic canoes? Who piloted you across the desolate sea?' they replied: 'Our God, Jehovah, gave us these blessings. He is the True God. Bow down to Him or you shall perish!'

"After considering the exact history of Jehovah's introduction, can you, Sea Foam, honestly claim that the South Sea Islanders accepted Him because of an inner conviction that He was the True God—or will you admit that He was accepted because it was customary to add new gods to the pantheon, and because He seemed to represent a *material* culture vastly superior to that of the islanders?

"However, Jehovah was added to the pantheon. The priests, recognising that He would supplant the old gods, accepted Him. All the people, seeing before them the marvels of European culture, associated these marvels with the power (mana) of Jehovah. They accepted Him so that they, too, might acquire what they erroneously thought to be His culture.

"This is how Jehovah came to the South Seas. Take note, Brother Sea Foam, that I have not said: 'This is how Christianity came to the South Seas.' I have a very real respect for the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The early missionaries did not bring these teachings, and, moreover, it is doubtful if many of the modern missionaries have

brought them. Certainly the religion you preach has nothing to do with the refined ethics and mysticism taught by Jesus Christ. The early missionaries brought to Danger Island a cruel and vengeful god; they preached original sin and infant damnation; they assured the natives that all their ancestors were burning in Hell and would burn there for ever; they demanded abject fear and devotion; they preached a puritanism as strait-laced as that of the Roundheads; they established church law and punishment; they found sin everywhere—on an island that before their coming had been sinless.

"They did not teach Christianity. It would be sacrilegious to suggest that John Williams's religion of Hell-fire had anything to do with the inspired teachings of Jesus Christ. But, perverted religion that it was, the Danger Islanders believed that it gave men power to consummate voyages never before dreamed of, in ships of magnitude that numbed the imagination. The Danger Islanders were willing to give absolute obedience to a god who could manifest his power in such miracles; and when they were called upon to destroy their idols, they did so, willingly, without fear."

At that instant, just as Javan was warming to his subject, his attention was distracted by frenzied whoops from the beach and the churchyard. He glanced toward the actors.

Guerin de Montglave, Lord of Vienne, rebellious subject of Charlemagne, stood with his two sons and four grandsons on the battlements of his fortress.

"There is Charlemagne!" shouted the Lord of Vienne, pointing to where a vast horde moved with deliberate and inexorable step along the lagoon beach.

"No!" came in a hollow tone from one of the warrior-sons; "those are but the scouts of Charlemagne!"

"There is Charlemagne!" the Lord of Vienne cried again, this time pointing to where a second horde of villagers left the beach to march slowly toward the churchyard.

"No; not yet," the warrior-son replied. "Those are but

the engineers with the catapults and battling rams!"

"Alas, alas! We are lost!" groaned Guerin de Montglave. "What hope for us if Charlemagne brings a greater host than this!"

Then, followed by a mighty army that blackened the sand of Central Village, Charlemagne himself appeared, in the person of King-of-the-Sky, gigantic, "his head covered with an iron helmet, his hands with iron gloves, his breast and shoulders with a cuirass of iron, his left hand holding an iron lance, while his right hand grasped his sword. Those who went before the monarch, those who marched at his side, and those who followed him, all had similar arms. Iron covered the fields and the roads; iron points reflected the rays of the sun. This iron, so hard, was borne by a people whose hearts were harder still. The blaze of the weapons flashed terror in the streets of the city."

"Why are your eyes so sad?" Miss Tears asked, edging close to Javan.

"Because, little one, I am thinking about how Jehovah came to Danger Island."

XXVII

Toa's First Attempt to Murder Bones

On the following morning, the Fourth of July, at the crack of dawn, the villagers returned to the shelters in the churchyard. The women brought frond baskets heaped with baked taro, fish, fowls, and drinking nuts; the men strolled to the diamond with their bats across their shoulders, glancing casually this way and that, mentioning randomly, "Ah, my neighbour; I see you have a bat. Perhaps you will play a little baseball to-day?" or replying, "Yes, my neighbour; I thought to limber up by batting a few high ones far out into the shell-fish beds."

At sunrise Deacon Bribery stumped to the bellhouse and tolled the bell. Javan rose from his seat in the cook-house, greeted Mama with a cheery "Good morning," and walked slowly to the churchyard. He was in time to see Parson Sea Foam moving along the coral road, followed as usual by Mrs. Sea Foam and the Misses Red-Jones and Tears. They moved with dignity through the churchyard gate; then, the women having taken their places in the bellhouse with Javan, the parson strode to the middle of the diamond, inadvertently to stand squarely in the pitcher's box. The bell ceased tolling; Deacon Bribery trotted to Leeward Village's grandstand. After removing his cap Sea Foam offered a prayer, in the unctuous tone that churchmen seem to believe is pleasing to the Lord. He told the Lord that a new form of diversion had come to Danger Island, a competitive game called "paytee paulee," a game he had examined closely and found free from sin. He explained this in detail, so the Lord would understand; then he asked for the Divine blessing, mentioning incidentally that he belonged to the Central

Village team, but suggesting, with a fine Christian gesture, that the Lord let his blessing flow equally to all three teams.

Throughout the prayer William shocked the villagers by whistling from his porch in a coconut-tree that leaned conveniently over the churchyard wall. With him were the bosom friends Arrowroot and Yam. It was a noble place from which to view the game.

They were not the only ones to find exclusive seats. At least fifty naked urchins were perched on the ridge of the church, like a row of evil black crows, chattering and cawing, making indelicate remarks about the players, groaning in unison when a batter was hit by one of Toa's fast ones or when one of the Village Fathers slipped and fell while trying to steal a base. At other times they would make sharp staccato noises so as to flabbergast the batter, or whoop discordantly when The Name was making furtive passes. Javan had promised each of them a lollipop if he would rout for the Windward Village team and ridicule the opposing ones.

At the end of the prayer Javan himself said a few words, but he modestly chose a position on first base rather than in the pitcher's box. He spoke of the significance of the Glorious Fourth, and gave a more or less graphic account of how Bunker Hill, in some indefinite year, but certainly on the Fourth of July, had held the bridge single-handed against an army of Redcoats, only relinquishing it when the Pilgrim Fathers of the North had chopped away the struts and the bridge had collapsed into the Delaware. After winding up a neat if flowery peroration he waved his long arms to signify that the playing could commence; then he returned to the bellhouse, reflecting that the Glorious Fourth had been very good business, and that next year he would repeat it with the addition of basket-ball for the women.

Now, Javan had trained the Windward Village team, he being nominally a member of that village. He had

calloused their hands with spitballs and developed a fine system of team work. He felt confident that they would win, and this in spite of King-in-the-Sky who, rumour had it, was sure to leave the field strewn with broken bats, like a tilting ground with splintered spears. Also, King-of-the-Sky was to be Leeward's pitcher; and the urchins who had been spying on the Leeward Village practice games, reported that the Sky King's balls travelled so fast they left trails of sparks behind them, like a frond torch carried against the wind, and they struck the catcher's shark-skin glove with reports louder than the detonation of seas on the outer reef.

This was disquieting; but Toa was to be Windward's star pitcher, while the second pitcher, The Name, was full of wiles calculated both to infuriate and bewilder the batter. Moreover, Bones, the first catcher, was no less than phenomenal. Bare-handed, naked from the waist up and the knees down, he looked with contempt on the thick gloves and body padding used by the Leeward and Central catchers. He could stop the fastest of Toa's balls with a swoop of the hand, with the unconscious facility of a woman picking strawberries. His long ape-like arms seemed to reach out in a radius of yards to pluck from the air the wildest balls, then hurl them back at Toa, wildly, but with terrible momentum. The three assistant catchers who stood behind Bones, each equipped with a copra sack to stop the balls he might miss, could lounge at ease against the churchyard wall.

Chief of Police Ura was Windward Village's weak man. Scarcely more than five feet tall and close on sixty years old, he could neither catch nor throw the ball; but with Constable Benny behind him, and a strapping youth behind Benny, the base was amply defended. The chief of police on first base, Javan reckoned, would intimidate many of the criminal element in the opposing teams; they would think twice before charging into the guardian of the law.

Though Javan had faith in the skill of his team, he put even greater confidence in their caps. Two years before, the head office had sent him six dozen bakers' caps, believing that he, a crack trader, would be able to dispose of them. Seldom does Javan fail the head office in little matters of this kind; but the caps caused him many a sleepless night—until he thought of baseball. Incidentally, the caps were not of very good quality, but they had printed on them attractive pictures of a flour mill, and the interesting slogan: *Bergwaller's Best Bakes Better Bread.* Howbeit, he sold the caps to Windward Village on the understanding that they should be returned and the money refunded, if they did not help win the series. The six dozen were scarcely too many, for there were sixty-eight players on the Windward team, all of whom would be in the field at once. Leeward and Central Villages had sixty-one and sixty players respectively.

The first game, between Central and Leeward Villages, ran smoothly and was completed before noon, with a score of eighty-two to six in favour of Leeward Village. There were a few irregularities, certain fine points to be discussed and to be settled by Javan, such as when Deacon Bribery requested that The Bird might bat for him, his arms being short and crooked, and that fleet-footed Trepang might make the bases for him, his legs being short and crooked also. After studying *The Pacific Islands Guidebook,* which Javan had brought to use symbolically as a book of rules, he conceded that the deacon's request was reasonable, and thus we set a precedent which was followed by other players. When the deacon made a run —with the co-operation of The Bird and Trepang—he felt quite pleased with himself, and told the neighbours about it.

After lunch, Leeward Village took the field against Windward Village. Great King-of-the-Sky strode to the pitcher's box, clad in his billiard-table green suit (which fitted much too tightly and was much too ancient for such

violent sport). In the Sky King's hand the baseball seemed no larger than an aspirin pill. He swung his arm with dignity, but great force, and the ball flashed through the air like a meteor. One could judge the speed of the ball by watching the grandstands, where hundreds of heads were jerked simultaneously from right to left, or left to right, depending on the position of the observers, in their vain attempt to follow the course of the ball. With a slow pitcher, like The Name, Javan would see the mass of heads moving slowly, like those of parents watching offspring riding the merry-go-round, rather than with a jerk, like those of offspring watching parents catching trains.

However, The Name, at the bat, was waiting for King-of-the-Sky's ball, a little tensely perhaps, but with eyes glinting through apertures 64. He bunted the ball towards first base, then, in spite of his four new and ripe boils, followed immediately behind it. The three first-basemen rushed for it. They collided with The Name, and for a little space all four were obscured in a cloud of sand and dust. Then The Name emerged, limping now, his face contorted with pain, his eyes larger by several centimetres. He made first base; then, to everybody's astonishment and while the boys on the church roof cheered him on, he limped slowly round the diamond, making the first home run of the series!

Though all three first basemen searched for the ball, even brushing away the gravel, as though they were searching for a fishhook, it was nowhere to be found. That night (to anticipate) when The Name came to the trading station, to have dressed the boil he had broken in the scramble, he told Javan that, just a second before one of the basemen had kicked him, he had "disposed" of the ball. He would confide no further; but Javan felt stupefied with sudden horror when, a moment later, The Name asked for an extra large dose of salts.

Bones went to bat next and sent both bat and ball flying into the lagoon. When they had started on their

flight Javan heard two little gasps from the girls at his side. He reflected that the gasps were identical in volume and tone, but Miss Red-Jones's had expressed gratification, Miss Tears's pain; and when he glanced at them he saw that the former's eyes were on Bones, while Miss Tears was watching Toa move from the bench to take his turn at bat.

Toa hit only a foul, which was caught by one of the Leeward catchers! Then Miss Red-Jones, inconstant to both her lovers, for the first and last time during the game, seemed concerned. She laughed in an abrupt and high-pitched manner, her face of the deeper brown, which signifies a blush. Toa heard the laugh. He stopped in the act of moving away from the plate; his body seemed to stiffen, while his eyes turned to the bellhouse as though he were wondering whether the laugh had been in pleasure or pain. The latter, Javan was convinced; but Toa seemed to come to a different conclusion, for he lowered his head in complete dejection and shuffled back to the bench.

The chief of police made a greater sensation than had either The Name or Bones. As soon as, or perhaps an instant before, the ball had left King-of-the-Sky's hand, Ura, with eyes closed and bat thrust out on stiffened arms before him, swung mightily. The boys on the church roof moaned in unison; the Windward Village routing section sighed; Miss Tears's expression of pain changed to a ripple of laughter. But the next instant everybody was cheering, for the bat was so heavy that its momentum swung little Ura round twice, and at the end of the second revolution the bat came accidentally in contact with the ball. Ura claimed later that he had done this on purpose, so as to give the ball greater velocity; in fact, it was a part of his special technique. Everybody then nodded his head, Ura being chief of police, but some thought he had exaggerated. He made two bases on that hit, for the ball had lodged in a coconut-tree and it took some time to get it down. A faster runner would have made three bases

easily. But in the end Ura did not get home, for Yam, Arrowroot, and one of the assistant short-stops came to bat next, and all three were struck out.

When Windward Village took the field the game became sinister, for now Bones stood behind the home plate while Toa pitched at him with force activated by unsuppressed hatred. Javan became horribly fascinated watching this symbolic play: it reminded him of a savage dog leaping at his keeper, but only to be brought up each time in mid-air by a leash that would never part. And, like the savage dog, it seemed at first that Toa could not learn that his efforts were wasted. Javan fancied him thinking: "He caught that one and grinned, so I must throw harder, faster, till the ball bores through those great paws of his, bores through his hairy body, bores through his heart!" Bones, on the other hand, stood close to the plate, oblivious of the bats that swung wildly within a few inches of his head. When Toa's most vicious pitches flew straight at him he would thrust out a hairy arm, there would be a sharp report, his fingers would close around the ball, he would grin, then hurl the ball back at Toa, though often so wildly that one of the many short-stops was obliged to retrieve it. There was no doubt about Bones's physical courage, or his lack of fear—for these two opposite qualities are often confused. Bones's prototype, in ancient times, must have had the same courage, and must have needed it when some wandering male from another horde came to kill him, take his women and become the Old Man himself.

During this part of the game Javan glanced more than once toward Miss Red-Jones, and each time he was troubled. Was it duplicity, or callousness, or self-control, or some subtle feminine inherence that enabled her to smile so impassively? Each time Toa, with lips tightly pressed, eyes narrowed, hurled the ball at Bones, and each time the Old Man plucked it out of the air to hurl it back at Toa, Miss Red-Jones would smile a little wearily, as

though all this had been amusing at first but now was tiresome. Then Javan wondered if this were not a part of the defence mechanism of primitive woman. She was accustomed to be taken by force, disposed of, fought for. It was important to her spiritual and physical well-being that she accept impassively the lust and homicides of her men. With Miss Red-Jones there was no conscious defence: hers was an emotional impassivity, the capacity for which had descended to her from atavistic sources—an impassivity actuated by instinctive awareness that it is both futile and dangerous to interfere, lest the one whom she favours lose, and the winner club her for her sentiments.

For a few seconds Javan's mind was blank; then, murmuring through it without conscious effort on his part, came words from a book he had read a few nights before: "In the lying poetic fancies of prehistoric times the woman, who had been the prize of battle and the allurement to murder, was probably turned into the seducer and instigator to the crime." He glanced toward Miss Red-Jones, then turned his eyes toward Miss Tern, in the Windward Village shelter.

King-of-the-Sky batted first on the Leeward Village team. He broke three bats to splinters as a preliminary demonstration; then, picking up a great ironwood club, he slugged one of Toa's fastest ones straight into a lofty coconut-tree. While a Windward Village youth was climbing after it King-of-the-Sky started round the diamond. Unhappily he had forgotten about the condition of his ancient suit. At second base it gave way in the seat of the pants, in an even split a little to right of centre—carried away in the bunt and blew to ribbons, as a sailor would put it. But the Sky King met the situation with dignity and the necessary hitching up of the remnants, and made third base easily. He got home later but, as Javan said, it was ticklish business: just touch and go.

Miss Red-Jones laughed over King-of-the-Sky's accident.

"Why did you laugh?" Javan asked her, but she replied only with a shrug of her pretty shoulders. "Very well," he replied for her; "you laughed because King-of-the-Sky had exposed himself indecently, which proves that indecent exposure, and the coarse humour derived from it, have been introduced to Danger Island with the custom of wearing pants. There is a man named Carlyle who has written a book on the philosophy of clothes, but he has not discussed this important aspect. I will write to him about King-of-the-Sky's exposure and tell him how it had appeared humorous to some of the villagers, while if they had seen the Sky King prancing around the diamond with no pants at all, it would have seemed to them neither indecent nor humorous. In this last case they would have been mildly perplexed: was the Sky King going to bathe, and was he first warming up with a little track sprinting? . . . Ah, Miss Red-Jones, you are not listening to me. You and your sister are watching Toa trying to murder Bones. . . . What are you thinking about, Miss Tears?"

"About love, Javan."

As the day advanced, one by one the Village Fathers and the wild youths took their turns at bat, the innings continuing until each player had had his turn. By mid-afternoon Toa was physically and spiritually exhausted. He had not so much as injured Bones, though several of his fast ones had struck the Old Man squarely on the body. Toa turned the pitcher's box over to The Name at the beginning of the seventeenth innings, while Bones kept his place as catcher.

When the sun lay low over the palms of Yato Point, Leeward Village was again at bat. The score was twenty-three to twenty-three, and this was the last innings.

To be brief, The Bird walked to first base; then Witch Doctor Pau and the village idiot struck out; then The Bird stole second, and then, with the score tie, George came to bat. He is one the best players on the island —but The Name was ready for him.

"Greetings, George!" The Name called from the pitcher's box. "Are you playing baseball?"

George replied by making his eyes snap. He gripped the bat firmly, struck the plate with it in the best big league tradition, then smiled grimly and nodded to The Name that he was ready.

Javan's wily branch store-keeper limbered up with a few gyrations of his left arm, he being sinister handed; then he threw the ball under his right knee and caught it. "Now I will pitch the ball!" he shouted suddenly, and made a clever feint at pitching.

George was getting excited. He must have imagined that he saw the ball coming, for he made a lunge at something, and with such force that the bat slipped out of his hands, to fly half-way across the diamond.

"Strike one!" the umpire cried.

"Ha! George-the-man!" The Name shouted. "I fooled you that time!"

The urchins on the church roof moaned in unison; the routing section in the Windward Village grandstand muttered angrily; a gasped "Oh!" came from Miss Tears.

In the midst of this excitement, before George had time to retrieve his bat, The Name threw a slow one squarely over the plate.

"Strike two!" the umpire cried.

Bones threw the ball back immediately, so The Name might get another one over the plate before George could return with his bat, but he threw wild, as usual, and by the time one of the short-stops had tossed the ball to The Name, George was again at his place, his eyes blazing now, mad as a hornet.

The Name was getting excited too. He threw three balls in quick succession, the third one aimed at George in an attempt to cripple him.

"Two strikes, three balls!" the umpire cried, and at the same instant The Bird slid to third base!

Just then Javan jumped to his feet and gave the pre-

arranged signal, when, like a flash, each member of Windward Village's team reached into his trousers pocket, drew out a baker's cap, and fixed it on his head! The effect was withering, as Javan had known it would be. It was an act symbolic and prophetic of victory: no less than imitative magic! It demoralised completely the opposing team! For a full three minutes not a word was spoken. It was so silent in the churchyard that one could hear the intermittent rumble of seas on the barrier reef, the rustle of the trade wind in the coconut-palms. Even the toddlers on the church roof were mute.

"All right, The Name; just toss a slow one over the plate!" Javan called softly; but his voice sounded startlingly loud in the expectant silence. "George won't even strike at it."

But at that instant King-of-the-Sky made the great sacrifice to his dignity, and thus frustrated the plans of even such a psychologist as Javan. He jumped to his feet with an ear-splitting whoop, dashed past The Bird, who was still on third base, and as all eyes followed him, charged straight for Windward Village's grandstand! His pants had not been mended. The sight was appalling! It was impossible to watch what was happening on any other part of the field. All eyes were fixed on King-of-the-Sky. He waved his arms above his head in a frenzied manner. He leaped in the air and knocked his heels together. He challenged any ten men to stand up and fight it out with him—anything, as Javan learned later, to attract attention.

"What have such unfair caps got to do with the game of baseball?" he roared; then he said a good many other things, no one of which can bear translation. In fact, he made such a scene that no one saw The Bird running like mad for the home plate. The lad made a spectacular slide home (though he might have walked there leisurely) before Javan was aware of the trick. Then it was too late: Leeward Village had won!

The caps were returned, and the villagers received cash

in exchange. Javan shudders when he tells of the days that followed, when all the Windward Villagers crowded in his trading station, buying things; but he had the satisfaction of returning the caps to the head office, and asking, in his indignant letter: "What have such unfair caps got to do with the business of trading?"

Javan remembers the baseball game as a single scene: Toa hurling viciously the ball at Bones; Bones thrusting out a great paw to snatch it from the air, and grinning sardonically.

XXVIII

Javan and Mama Discuss Marriage and Babies

"The feminine mind, Mama, is controlled by vanity and habit," Mr. Moonlight said. "Take your own case as an example: so many years of your life have been devoted to beautifying yourself so as to fascinate William—and others, too, no doubt—that you now have bobbed your hair in a more or less conscious effort to fascinate me. I shall never marry you."

Javan poured a second bowl of coffee, sipped it, and turned his head to stare out the cook-house window—not to watch the dawn, however, for the sky was leaden and dead, but to avoid seeing the grotesque figure Mama presented with her bobbed hair. "Fifty years ago," he growled, "it might have been excusable."

"Oh no, Javan," Mama said hurriedly, a trifle out of breath; "I'm too old to marry you, even if William were dead. You'd better marry someone your own age—someone like Miss Tears."

"Miss Tears is not my own age," Javan snapped. "You classify all persons between four and forty as belonging to the younger generation. As it happens, I may marry Miss Tears, or Miss Tern, or Miss Red-Jones, or all three of them; but I object—before the third bowl of coffee, at least—to having them referred to as of my own age."

"Yes, that's right, Javan: you'd better marry them, for you love babies, and I won't mind setting a few extra places at the table; but I don't think you should let them have coffee with you, because you're so cross in the morning, and I am the only one who really knows had to handle you so early, though I think Miss Tears would be quiet

if I had a little talk with her. . . . But I was speaking of babies, Javan: I have just heard that it was a false report about Miss Red-Jones. You remember I told you she was going to have a baby; but I didn't tell you whose baby it was, because you had been drinking strong beer with William the night before, and you know, the mornings after. . . ."

"It was a false report about Miss Red-Jones, Mama. . . ."

"Yes, just as I was telling you. Last night she found that she wasn't going to have a baby after all, because . . ."

"Really, Mama, what delightful breakfast-table conversation! Are you aware that you have just dropped two perfectly good eggs in the pan of stewed apricots? Now, take two more eggs, and try to concentrate your mind on what you are doing as you drop them *gently* in the frying-pan—having first removed their shells."

Mama turned to frown at the empty frying-pan; then she thrust a pair of bony fingers in the stewed apricots and tried to fish out the eggs; but the sauce was too hot for her fingers, though not hot enough to have congealed the eggs. Presently she gave up the somewhat messy attempt, cracked open two more eggs and got them safely in the frying-pan, having forgotten nothing except the grease. When she turned toward Javan to give a more detailed account of Miss Red-Jones's affair he silenced her.

"Watch the eggs, woman!" he said sharply, fairly whirling her around. "Concentrate on them. Keep your eyes glued on them until they are done; then serve them.

"Now Mama," he went on, as she stood tensely over the stove, her eyes fixed on the eggs, her mouth open slightly, her mind, no doubt, far from her task, "to a man of my breeding it is remarkable that you should have spoken about Miss Red-Jones's pregnancy, and later have said that it was a false report. It is also remarkable that you should daily furnish me with news of the private affairs of our neighbours, such as when a maiden has been initiated on the outer beach, the night she has changed

her lover, when she has entered the premarriage period of promiscuity. Moreover, it is remarkable, if not indecent, that you should tell me that Mrs. Sea Foam's baby is quickening, Mrs. King-of-the-Sky's baby is a week late in coming, Mrs. Ura's baby has arrived. Aye, Mama, you always tell me when a woman is to have a child or when a maiden has undergone the preliminary biological formality incidental to having a child. In fact, you seem to think of little else, and that is why both my eggs are raw on top and burned to a cinder below. . . . There's Benny's wife, Mama. She has just passed behind the copra shed, but you'll see her in a minute. There she goes, Mama. I believe she is pregnant!"

"Yes, Javan," Mama replied with a sniffle; "you always notice those kinds of things."

Javan gave Mama a hard look; then he asked: "Did it ever occur to you that such subjects are indecent to me, though no more than casual news to you?"

"Is it indecent to have a baby?" Mama asked.

"It is not indecent to have a baby, but it is indecent to mention it. This is one of the profound moral truths which are so subtle that no one can explain them. It is not indecent to embrace one's wife in a closed house at night, with the light turned off, but it is unspeakably immodest to mention, as a Danger Islander might: 'I had a good time with my wife last night.'

"Only the other day," Javan went on, raising his voice, for there was evidence in the muscular twitching about Mama's lips that she wished to speak, "Pau told me, with a grin of satisfaction, his right thumb pointing to his wife: 'Bosun-woman is big with child again. She's a fine woman: she has them regularly, one every year.'

"Or take the case of two lollipop-conscious toddlers who were in the trading station yesterday—namely, Rachel, age four, and Ann, age six. 'How is your Mama?' Ann asked Rachel. 'Has she had her baby yet?' Then innocent four-year-old Rachel replied: 'No; she's still running around

with a big belly.' Shocking, of course, to me, but amusing precocity to her parents. Moreover, I am sure their conversation showed healthy minds, for there was no morbid curiosity connected with it, no scurrility nor obscenity. It impressed me as being parallel in significance to a conversation in which one civilised child asks another: 'Has your hen hatched her chicks?' and the other replies: 'No; she is still sitting on her eggs.'

"Now, Mama, any man who repeated Rachel's and Ann's conversation in polite society would be ostracised: he might even be put in jail. Yet I wonder which is the purest in thought and deed: the Anglo-Saxon who blushingly hides pregnancy or the Polynesian who is frankly proud of it?

"Nowadays at Danger Island a pregnant woman is not supposed to go to church. She has been told by the missionaries that it is immodest to expose her pregnancy. She accepts this dictum without understanding it. Her neighbours know she is pregnant shortly after she herself knows it. She is proud to show her condition in any public place except the church. Even the more amoral of the villagers look upon her with respect if not envy. So one wonders who is foul minded: the missionary who tells her she must hide herself because of a natural and praiseworthy pregnancy, or the woman herself, who is inclined to brag about her condition?

"As you may have noticed, Mama—for you seem to miss nothing which pertains to sex and babies—during the last May Day celebration, when the Reverend Johns and his wife were here, we had a mummery of the *Birth of Jesus* presented in the modern, realistic manner. On one side of the churchyard the Three Wise Men discussed the portent of the Star of Bethlehem; on the other side stood a makeshift shed with a packing-case serving as a manger. Mary, Joseph, and a number of the relatives were in the shed. Soon Mary felt the pains of labour. She squatted by the manger, her knees flexed, while Joseph sat behind her and

pressed with both hands in the small of her back, so as to relieve her pain.

"At this point I glanced toward the reverend couple. They were fidgeting. The Reverend Johns coughed in an irritated manner, then glanced toward Parson Sea Foam, whose face was wreathed in smiles. Mrs. Johns was crimson.

"The Reverend did not stop the mummery for another moment. Perhaps he was restrained by morbid curiosity —who knows? The mummery continued until a doll had been delivered. Then the Reverend jumped to his feet screaming: 'Stop it! Disgusting! Stop it this instant!'

"To him the birth of Jesus was disgusting. Mrs. Johns was beyond words. Later, aboard *Cockroach Schooner,* her face even then red with shame, she said she had never in her life been so insulted.

"The Reverend Johns lectured the neighbours severely. Parson Sea Foam would have lost his benefice had there been anyone to take his place.

"Now, Mama, are not men like the Reverend Johns unwittingly teaching the natives to be foul-minded? Here at Danger Island we see a mummery about the birth of Jesus and we leave with no impure thoughts. No boys sneak out behind the barn to giggle smuttily over a marvellous biological phenomenon. Probably our local boys wonder why the deacons had chosen such a commonplace subject for a mummery. They have seen real births many times. Now, if the deacons had chosen something exciting —something like the Fall of Babylon, or Jonah and the Whale. . . .

"But the Reverend Johns thinks differently, and by carrying his belief into practice he defeats his own end: by teaching the people that sexual love, pregnancy, and parturition are indecent he wakens in them a morbid curiosity to discover for themselves that they are indecent; and though they are unable to do this they will, in the course of time, through constant reminders, conceive of

as impure that which formerly was chaste and commendable.

"Poor Johns and wife! What shame and humiliation they must have felt during the six different periods of Mrs. Johns' pregnancy! They must have fancied the natives snickering at them, when in fact the natives were only pleased to note that they, too, were human. I can understand, now, suicide among pregnant women—particularly the unmarried ones."

Mama was about to comment when her attention was turned to Miss Red-Jones, who had left Sea Foam's house to pass along the lagoon beach. Javan glanced at her only long enough to note that she walked rapidly, and that she made a slight gesture with her hand as she glanced toward the cook-house. Then, silencing Mama, who had started to speak, he resumed his subject—

"To think, Mama, that in civilised countries," he cried, stressing the word "civilised" so loudly that William could no longer restrain himself, but must, perforce, leave his hiding-place behind the copra shed and stump to the cook-house—"that in *civilised* countries unmarried pregnant women have committed suicide to escape the shame of exposure, when by all the rules of Danger Island sense, their pregnancy is evidence of their fulfilling the most sacred mission possible to a human being. But these poor girls are not fulfilling their mission under the sanction of Parson Poorbaugh or with the signed permit of Registrar Plum. So they destroy themselves as well as their unborn babes!"

"Javan, Miss Red-Jones. . . ."

"Be quiet, woman; it is only at long separated intervals that thoughts such as these come to me. Miss Red-Jones, as you were saying, is, or would be, as proud of her pregnancy as though the child had been begotten without shameful coition. Miss Red-Jones is not yet sin-conscious —but be of good cheer, Mama, for the True Faith is even now grinding exceedingly fine, and in a few more years

the Miss Red-Joneses will know themselves as sinners; then we shall have the righteous spectacle of maidens with smirks and blushes, with inhibitions, with the interesting neuroses and psychoses which bless the civilised maid."

"Miss Red-Jones is going to have a baby!" William bellowed so loudly that there was no hope of drowning his voice.

"No, William," Javan said quickly, "it was a false rumour. Mama has explained certain physical symptoms which I will not repeat to you, there being a lady present, but which obviate the possibility of Miss Red-Jones being pregnant. Which reminds me that it is often permissible to talk about such things with a lady as long as there are no men present, or with a man so long as there are no ladies present. This is another of the subtle distinctions in the laws of propriety.

"Speaking of immorality, I would not care for companionship with a man who did not feel excitation at the sight of a pretty leg.

"Like all humans I am mildly excited by the seminakedness of a burlesque show, a popular beach resort, or a fashionable dining-room. I am also mildly excited when Miss Tears comes tripping past the station on her way to the lagoon beach, her naked skin gleaming. But for some reason which the psychologists can explain for me, this décolletage of the dining-room excites me in a way that seems morbid, while naked Miss Tears excites me with normal desire. For instance, I cannot imagine anyone raping Miss Tears. There is lacking in one's feeling for her the morbid curiosity which, I believe, is quite different from and more dangerous than a frank and comprehensible desire. I cannot imagine a person raping Miss Tears, but I can fancy an imagination so diseased by repressed desire, fantasy, visualisation, curiosity, that it will actuate one to assault the modestly décolleté damsel at a fashionable summer resort."

"William," Javan continued, "I prefer the primitive

man's way of handling matters. The man desires the woman; the woman desires the man; they come together under the moonlit magnolia bushes on the outer beach—which is much more romantic than a hotel bedroom—they are satisfied and they forget about it. How much more healthful this is than the repression practised in other countries."

"Sure t'ing," the old heathen agreed at once. "When you want one woman you grab her, and by 'nd by you send her about her business. Whas a matta? That's no one good t'ing?"

"Perhaps, to low creatures like yourself," Javan said, with a sniffle, his annoyance at the heathen's crude expression making him contradict himself. . . . "Aye, perhaps to anyone, come to think it over. . . . But speaking of sexual love, William, I believe the primitive man is no more ardent than the civilised man."

"Oh, the white fellers like their gals, all right," William roared with a great guffaw. "When I sail to Barbary Coast on Captain Pester ship I see, oh yes, how the white fellers like their gals. I see hun'erds, t'ousands of big hotels all full of pink gals; and I see fellers going in fast and coming out slow. Hell and damn! Plenty number one wild gals on Barbary Coast!"

"William," Javan said sharply, "I am speaking of *civilised* man, a genus you have yet to meet—outside myself, of course. Now, the primitive man is no more ardent than the civilised man: the married Polynesian functions with the same regularity as the married white man—but there is a different relative state among the unmarried. There is no reason why a Danger Island youth should not live a full sexual life; but to most white bachelors this is impossible, undesirable, or inadvisable: impossible because of lack of money, undesirable because of repugnance toward prostitution, inadvisable because of one's reputation. So the civilised bachelor builds morbid fancies around the sexual act: often enough he lives in a

state of constant sexual craving. In this morbid condition he fancies all kinds of absurd things about women: he makes their possession the important thing in life—or, in extreme cases of frustration, he defends himself by transmuting his desire into hatred.

"It's no good, William. They handle matters much better here, where a woman takes a man both because she likes his looks and wants a baby."

Feeling an unaccountable irritation in the region of the larynx, Javan fell silent. The sun was well above the coconut-trees. A band of light had fallen across the table, illuminating the sugar-bowl with its inscription: *Joe's Coffee Not Over Half Chicory.* Javan felt he would never escape from Mama's and William's chatter unless he rose without ceremony and tramped out of the cook-house. This he started to do, but when he had reached the doorway Mama whispered, with ironic satisfaction—

"I have been trying to tell you, Javan, and William *has* told you, but you wouldn't listen to him, that Miss Red-Jones is going to have a baby."

Javan turned to eye Mama coldly. "Is that your idea of wit?" he asked. "You have already told me that it was a false report."

"Yes, Javan," Mama lisped in a girlish tone which accentuated the grotesque girlishness of her bobbed hair; "but while you were talking about something I found that last night's sickness was a mistake. She is going to have a baby, after all."

"And who told you this?"

"Miss Red-Jones told me, Javan."

"Miss Red-Jones passed at one hundred yards away, and she did not speak to you."

Mama giggled for a little space; then she explained that, as Miss Red-Jones had passed, one of her eyelashes had flickered while her left index finger had been crooked so that it pointed toward her waist. So, Mama concluded, there wasn't any doubt about it.

"The immodest hussy!" Javan growled, as he tramped out of the cook-house.

Two days later he sailed to Matauea Point, there to relax, to invite his soul, to read Marcel Proust, to observe the dawn until the Christmas holidays.

XXIX

The Tapus of Witch Doctor Pau

"I WANT a pig and twenty fowls," Javan said to The Name when he had entered the branch store. "There will be a Christmas feast to-morrow at the Line Islands Trading Company's station on Danger Island. You, your woman, and whatever toddlers you may have about at the time, are invited. But first get me the pig and fowls."

A thoughtful "Hm!" came from The Name, and, as each eye increased in circumference by three centimetres, he turned to glance at the empty shelves as though to intimate that he had sold out the last of his pigs and fowls.

"I have already noticed that your station is empty," Javan said. "So is the main station, thank God! An empty trading station is a sign of good business. May your station remain empty, or rather may my station remain empty. Get me the pig and fowls this morning and bring them to the cook-house."

The Name knit his brows without in the least affecting the perfect circularity of his eyes. One cannot hurry The Name: Javan learned that years ago. If there are fifty eager customers in his store, all shouting for tobacco, he will go about his business with the sublime deliberation of a priest offering the sacrament; he will cut with precision a penny's worth of tobacco, eye it, smell it, measure it, weigh it in his hand, give it to the customer with the greatest reluctance, and take the penny with a shade less reluctance. He will study the coin, frown, and wag his head, never forgetting that once, years ago, he had accepted accidentally a French ten-centime piece and never had discovered the criminal who had cheated him. The coin is still in his money-bag, an eloquent reminder of the

dangers of commerce and the turpitude of man. So when making a tobacco sale The Name will study the coin, frown, wag his head, and move back and forth the gadget that controls the iris diaphragm. He will make little out of the head of King George V and less out of the inscription: *Georgius V Dei Gra: Britt: Omn: Rex: Fid: Ind: Imp:* He will turn the coin over, smile wistfully as he studies the familiar figure of Britannia with her trident, her shield, and her jutting breasts; then reading, "One penny" (but pronouncing it "Vuni beni"), he will decide that it is a British coin right enough, and so there is left only the formality of biting it and ringing it on the counter before depositing it in the money-bag. This last also takes time, for no matter how rushing is business The Name always keeps his money-bag securely tied; and each time he puts a penny in it he must first bite and finger-nail the hard knot till it is loose, remove the string, and circumspectly drop in the coin. Then the bag must be tied again, for all the world as though he had finished business for the week-end. And when eventually he turns to the next customer the same procedure must be repeated. The customers like it: it sublimates their penny purchases to important commercial transactions—and they are in no hurry to rush off to the office or the golf course: The Name's store is as good a place as any to spend the day.

When Javan is in a hurry he repeats to The Name his request, over and over again, until the total of his repetitions produces enough galvanism, as it were, on the dull surface of The Name's brain to excite it into action. Thus to-day he said: "I want a large pig and twenty fowls. Get them from men who owe you money. . . . I want a large pig . . ." and so on, six times, as he knew, for each time he crooked one of his fingers. He has found that when the weather is sultry he must crook all ten fingers before The Name's eyes expand to a radius which denotes comprehension, but when there is a chill wind from the south the fingers of one hand will suffice.

On this morning The Name stood perfectly still save only for his eyes, that expanded and contracted like sea anemones or Cepheid variables; then presently he started to nod his head slowly, the movement accelerating in direct ratio to the combined volume of Javan's tone until, finally, an assent—"I'll get them for you right away, Javan, though my boils are simply killing me"—was nodded from his half-open lips.

The Name was donning his business suit when Javan left. Two hours later the pig and the fowls were tethered by the cook-house; and two hours before sunset Javan had marshalled the trading station forces preliminary to preparing his Christmas feast. Mama put a kerosene tin half-full of water on the stove and kindled a fire beneath it; William snatched up two of the fowls, flung them on their sides, and strangled them by placing one great foot across each feathered neck—a form of barbarism he seemed to enjoy. Javan told Toa to kill the pig.

"No, Javan," Toa replied, shaking his head and staring at his employer with a startled expression. "You and William will have to kill it."

Javan eyed him sharply, at first perplexed; but he smiled and understood when Toa added: "You know, Javan, that Miss Red-Jones is big with child. I can't strangle the pig or the baby will be born with a sore neck; I can't drown it or the baby will be afraid of the water; I can't stick it, like you do, or the baby will be born with some terrible affliction—I don't know what, because we don't stick pigs on Danger Island. Maybe the baby will have a red spot on its shoulder, or it will bleed at the mouth." With a complacent shrug he turned to walk toward the station. "You'll have to do it yourself," he concluded, without even a glance toward Javan, "and I don't think I'd better help you clean it, either, for then the baby will have a tender skin or, maybe, be baldheaded. I can ask Pau, and if he says it is safe I will help you."

"How many more youths on Danger Island can't kill

pigs because of Miss Red-Jones's pregnancy?" Javan asked in the sarcastic tone he reserves ordinarily for the passengers on *Cockroach Schooner;* then he regretted his words, for Toa's eyes seemed to constrict with pain.

"It's not Bones's child, if that's what you mean!" Toa cried, throwing back his shoulders. "The child is mine. Pau says so, and so does Miss Red-Jones. The child is not even George's. I know the night it was conceived, and that was before Miss Red-Jones had been with anybody else."

Javan did not ask for substantiating evidence, but he uttered a few friendly curses to change the subject and to distract Toa's attention. In this William joined, not because he did not fully agree with Toa but simply because he enjoyed cursing. Mama glanced at Javan and William—the heathen was now strangling the ninth and tenth fowls with the inhumanity of a Frankenstein monster —and told them they should be ashamed of themselves. She spoke of the poor innocent baby, muttered something about how men think only of conceiving babies and are not in the least interested in the baby's welfare: they would ruin its whole career before it was born. However, Javan put an end to the discussion by getting out his marlinspike and sticking the pig so effectively that even William granted him a grunt of approval, while Mama sighed: "Alas! the poor little pig!"—it weighed two hundred and fourteen pounds—"How can you be so heartless, Javan? . . . But don't forget to save me a piece of its liver."

"No wonder the Reverend Johns and the rest of them think these people are stupid," Javan thought as he scraped the pig. "Now here's Miss Red-Jones: for months, under Pau's guidance, she has given close attention to her diet lest she injure the fœtus. She has refrained from eating taro that is bumpy lest her child's head be bumpy, from crabs lest her child be bowlegged, from sea-birds lest her child be splayfooted, from coconuts that form tightly pressed

in a large bunch lest her child's head be pressed out of shape in the womb, from poultry lest her child be pigeon-breasted—literally a hundred or more such tapus. Toa has been under similar restrictions. He has been warned by Pau against spearing fish lest the child's navel fail to heal, against striking things like an axe on wood lest the child's head be injured, against clubbing turtles lest the child be born with a sore neck, against piercing the soft eye of a drinking nut lest the child be born blind. All this, of course, is imitative magic."

Javan broke off his musings to inspect William's twenty fowls, all now plucked, with Toa's help, for the store-boy decided it might be safe to pluck fowls, a baby having no feathers to injure. Then Javan disembowelled the pig, gave Mama her piece of liver (which she laid on the coals at the edge of the fire), and taking the more presentable of the pig's internal affairs he put them through a meat grinder with the last of the onions, four sections of garlic, and numerous ship's biscuits. He added four bowls of boiled rice, salt, pepper, cayenne, thyme, sage, celery salt, four one-pound tins of oysters and six one-pound tins of apples. After stirring the mixture he fried a cake of it and found it good. Then he stuffed the dressing into the pig, got out his palm, sail twine, and needle, and sewed the creature up. Later, he handed it over to the baking department—that is, to William.

Meanwhile, Mama had boiled twenty *utos* and grated the meat from five coconuts. (An *uto* is the pulpy substance that forms in a sprouting coconut, and absorbs the meat to pass it on, in a form that can be assimilated, to the sprout.) Mama boiled the *utos,* mashed them, squeezed on them milk from the grated coconuts, added a cup of sugar and five cups of arrowroot starch, kneaded the mess into a thin dough, divided it in four parts and wrapped each in a banana-leaf. These also were turned over to the baking department.

As the evening twilight deepened, and the great fire

in William's native oven reddened the white walls of the trading station, Mama pared a basket of taro roots and wrapped them in cordia leaves, while Toa cleaned a ten-pound albacore that George had sent as a Christmas gift. These, too, were turned over to William, while the fowls were packed in a five-gallon stew-pan, which was set on the back of the stove to simmer.

It was dark when the oven was ready. The huge pile of heated stones was levelled by prodding it with the butt-end of a coconut-frond; the Christmas dinner was laid on the stones, then covered with green leaves, matting, copra bags and sand. There it would steam and roast for eighteen hours.

In preparing the feast Javan had used the greater part of the remnant of his personal provisions. There still remained, to last him six months, a bag of coffee, a bag of sugar, and a few pounds of tea, while among the remaining trade goods there were tobacco, matches, soap, kerosene, and a few tins of beef. However, Javan claims that there are but few necessaries for a satisfactory life in the South Seas. Often he states that there are but six things he really needs, but at other times, when the last of the brew has been up-ended, he will amend his list and claim that there are seven necessaries—namely, tobacco, matches, coffee, sugar, soap, kerosene—and a bottle of the Special No. IV. This last was far from exhausted on the present occasion.

When the oven was covered, Javan asked William to come in the station for a bottle of brew. The heathen complied with his usual alacrity, and, when their glasses were filled, he asked Javan, with respect actuated by craft, if the white men had tapus to obey when their women were pregnant. Javan sighed, aware that his retainer was shuffling only for a long bout of beer-drinking; but because Javan felt like talking on this Christmas Eve, he replied:

"Some do: it depends on their material culture. Magic, such as you practise, begins where material culture ends.

With the white men a highly developed material culture has narrowed the field of magic. Take one instance, medicine: I do not depend entirely on magic to cure my patients, because I have a few specific remedies for them; Pau has no specifics, because on an atoll the proper drugs and herbs are unobtainable, so perforce he must resort wholly to magic. Or take navigation: white men navigate their ships with instruments of precision and highly refined mathematical formulæ; the Polynesians navigate by magic because their material culture as well as the resources of their islands obviate the use of scientific methods. Or again: the white man protects himself from fire, earthquake, and hurricane by constructing his buildings of steel and cement; the South Sea Islanders resort to magic because they have no steel or cement or the wherewithal to make them. In illustration of this last, a Fijian chief wishes to build a house that will withstand the fiercest hurricane, so he digs deep wide postholes, places therein the house posts, and at each post a warrior with his arms and legs embracing it. The warriors are then ceremoniously clubbed and buried in this position. Thus, when a hurricane rages over the island, the chief can rest secure in the knowledge that a score of dead warriors are gripping the great cordia posts of his house, all having been clubbed with the proper ceremony; and if the house blows down nevertheless, then the clubbing ceremony has been faulty, vexing the warriors and making them unfaithful to their trust. Had the chief reinforced cement, the warriors would be superfluous: thus magic begins where material culture ends."

"White fellers savvy everyt'ing; Kanakas all the same Goddam fools," William growled as he opened, without permission, another bottle of brew.

"Perhaps so, if you take yourself as an example of the native race," Javan snapped testily, at the same time taking the brew bottle from William and placing it on the counter by his elbow. "But I do not intend to take you as

an example of anything except a beach Kanaka. . . . Now, take the New Zealand Maoris: there is a Maori minister in the government, a Maori director of the Bishop Museum; there was a Maori professor at Yale; and there have been any number of eminent Maori doctors, lawyers, scientists. Well, the Maoris are of precisely the same race as the Danger Islanders. There is no reason why one of our neighbours should not advance intellectually as far as a white man or even a Maori—if given the opportunity.

"But there is danger in too rapid a transition from the age of stone to the age of unessentials. It has taken the white race thousands of years to advance from neolithic to modern culture; but now, having arrived, the white race would have the brown race make the change in a few decades. It cannot be done, any more than tropical plants can in a few years be acclimatised to temperate conditions. The danger in this rapid transition is tragically disclosed in large graveyards and small villages—or no villages at all, as can be observed on many of the now uninhabited islands."

"Oh, yes; the white fellers too much savvy everyt'ing," William guffawed again, in an attempt to distract Javan's attention as he retrieved the brew bottle.

"Yes, William; you may fill your glass,: then hand me the bottle. . . . As I was about to say, I believe people confuse stupidity with ignorance. Because a primitive man has not garnered the same harvest of knowledge, and hence material culture, as has the white man, the former is considered stupid, while in truth he is only ignorant. Even you, William, know that stupidity is the constitutional inability to acquire knowledge, while ignorance is the lack of knowledge, but not necessarily the lack of intelligence. The finest minds remain ignorant when not given the opportunity to acquire knowledge. Our ignorant Danger Island neighbours are, with a few exceptions, intelligent. They are little above the Stone Age in material culture, but one must remember that they were unable to enter

the Bronze Age, there being no copper or tin on the island; and likewise the Iron Age, there being no iron ore or coal. Considering that they have had only wood and a soft variety of coral to work with, one must marvel at the high order of culture they have developed—for instance, in making sailing canoes seaworthy for long ocean voyages. No less an authority than Doctor Lewis H. Morgan has written: '. . . civilisation must be regarded as an accident of circumstances. . . After reaching the Middle Status of Barbarism, civilisation hung in the balance while barbarians were feeling their way, by experiments with native metals, toward the process of smelting iron ore. Until iron and its uses were known, civilisation was impossible.' In other words, civilisation depended upon a certain specialised knowledge, not on intelligence."

"Oh, yes; white fellers too much savvy everyt'ing, do everyt'ing, bloody Hell!" William growled still once again.

"Aye," Javan said as he locked the station and climbed to the living quarters, leaving William, somewhat perplexed and peeved, to wander home comparatively sober—"Aye, we the white fellers too much savvy everyt'ing, do everyt'ing. We have killed the African lion and tamed the wild elephant; we have exterminated the crocodile and harpooned the last leviathan; we have split the hydrogen atom and timed the Cepheid variable, fought the last great war and vanquished the last enemy; we have dispatched Santa Claus and sent Cinderella packing, destroyed the giants and fairies and standardised the imagination; but in place of these we have established a number of facts, like the square of minus-one, and the interest on our national debt. One may travel securely to-day through silent jungles and lifeless savannas, over the desolate sea and in the uninhabited mountains; for we have tamed the savage peoples and mapped the rugged countries; the contours of every hill, the wanderings of the last river, the pathless sea and the pathless prairie, the pathless

mountain solitudes we have mapped on Mercator's projection. One need not search for undiscovered lands, for all are mapped, numbered, and indexed; one need not study the primitive races, for all have acquired the American accent.

"Aye, William," Javan went on, raising his voice, and addressing his retainer, though by now William was far away in Windward Village—"Aye, William, we are the white fellers who too much savvy everyt'ing. We have chopped down the primordial forest so we might read the Sunday supplement; we have mined the beds of coal and drained the lakes of oil so we might warm our toes by the patent heater; we have dug the mountains of ore, dammed the rivers so as to make ten million gadgets and furnish the power to use them. We are the great men of America, William, for now our children will not lose themselves in the primordial forest, nor will they be devoured by lions and crocodiles; and though they may fall into the coal-pits which we have forgotten to close, they will not be tempted to speculate in the steel industry, in oil stock, in voyages of discovery; nor will they waste their substance in coal purchases, in petrol, in Sunday supplements. Aye, William, we are the fathers of the last century, the fellers who too much savvy everyt'ing. Our sons of the next century will thank their fathers for the safety of Democracy, the lionless jungle, the whaleless sea, the treeless forest, the untaxed imagination, the mapped, numbered, and indexed universe. Our sons will remember that we have left them a nice stagnant world without frontiers, without hazard. Aye, William, we are the wise fellers who too much savvy everyt'ing."

Javan fell silent, startled by his own voice resounding through the empty trading station.

XXX

Miss Tears at Javan's Dinner Party

The wind shifted to all points of the compass, coming in squalls and gusts, followed by dead calm when the heat seemed to bear down on one. Javan felt that he was swathed in woollen bandages. But he has been through many hurricane seasons: he knew that soon the wind would come roaring down from the north-west, rough, uncouth, piling the seas over the reef and across the shallows in foaming eddies, bending the long boles of the coconut trees, raising the thatching on the native huts, bringing relief in chill downpours that leave the air clean and crisp.

During the morning Javan put the finishing touches to his Christmas dinner: a dash of Tabasco here, a curry sauce there, a pinch of humble salt elsewhere, fortifying himself betimes with a glass of Extra Special Holiday brew. This last was indicated on Christmas morning, for Javan was obliged to observe that absurd custom introduced by Three Wise Men some nineteen hundred years ago—namely, exchange of gifts.

"Even at Danger Island I cannot escape these Christian conventions," he sighed when Deacon Bribery wobbled duck-like to the cook-house door, a worthless cowrie shell in one hand, an empty pipe in the other.

"A little Christmas present for you, Javan dear," the deacon whined, presenting the shell. "A present in memory of the birth of the Lord's son, little Javan."

"Ah, my old friend Deacon Bribery!" Javan was obliged to exclaim as a matter of business policy, though not of genuine sentiment. "What a beautiful shell! I shall send it to my Aunt Adelina, and tell her how even you, Deacon, bearded the sharks and the octopods and the conger eels

when diving deep in the lagoon to pluck it from its cavern. . . . But I see that your pipe is cold. I wonder if you would accept a stick of Lord Beaconsfield twist—so named because all the dukes and earls of London smoke nothing else? . . . Yes?" And so Javan handed the deacon a stick of tobacco, smiled him out the doorway, and turned his attention to the curried fowls and the Extra Special Holiday brew.

So it went, throughout the day, all the tobacco-hungry old men taking advantage of the Christmas convention to cadge tobacco, and Javan continuing to fortify himself at the rate of one glass to each presentation until, when the guests arrived, he was able to exhibit, as it were, both a Christmas dinner and a true South Sea trader's Christmas spirit.

It is for this reason that Javan is vague about that particular celebration. However, one gathers that it was a success. Mama was a-tremble throughout the meal, but charming, wise, and motherly in her flowing Mother Hubbard dress of black lawn. William acted as butler, and though his brow was thunderous, he cursed only once: a mere "Hell-damn!" when Mama omitted placing a platter under the roast pig (an excusable omission when one remembers that Javan had no platter big enough to hold a two-hundred-pound pig). Parson Sea Foam was at the head of the table, with Mrs. Sea Foam, Miss Red-Jones, and Miss Tears strung out at his right hand, while at his left was The Name, Chief of Police Ura, Constable Benny, and Witch Doctor Pau—a happy Danger Island party.

As usual, Sea Foam said a lengthy grace, annoying Javan slightly, for Javan believes that a Christian should respect the religious inclinations of his Buddhist host. But long before the grace had ended he had reasoned that, by not being annoyed, he would be demonstrating the superior tolerance of the Buddhist; and so, by the time Sea Foam had intoned his solemn "Amen," Javan could echo an "Amen" which had all the sonorous qualities of sincerity.

The whole roast pig had been laid in the centre of the table; and it was so tender, after eighteen hours of baking, that the guests could tear off great portions and consume them without the boring formality of mastication. The fowls had been curried in coconut milk; the ten-pound albacore was served steaming hot and unadorned, while the bundles of taro and the *uto* puddings were heaped between the kettle of fowls, the albacore, and the pig. There were a few score of bananas, many bottles of sauce made from coconut milk, sea water, and the red peppers that grow on Frigate Bird Islet, a panful of the last of the rice, and a plate heaped with the last of the ship's biscuits. It was not a perfectly balanced meal (if one were to judge by the theories of the lady dieticians); but on an atoll, as in the Far North, a man dines on what he can obtain, and he discovers that his meal agrees with him and sustains him. If he is familiar with the "new dietetics" it is with astonishment that he realises he has lived without the "absolutely essential" orange juice, tomato juice, vegetables, fruit, and milk. He even doubts, during moments of wild speculation, if these "essentials" are essential.

There was no conversation during the meal, only the rhythmic sucking sounds as portions of food were dipped in the bowls of coconut sauce, then placed in the mouth with quick intakes of air so that oxidisation would intensify the flavour. There were no after-dinner witticisms, no coercion as to what and how much one must eat, no asking questions of a person whose mouth is full (as a dentist invariably does when a patient's mouth is full of absorbent lint, instruments, and fingers). There was no obligation to be bright, witty, cheerful when gorged. The guests at Javan's dinner-party were there for the avowed purpose of eating as much as possible: even the dainty Misses Red-Jones and Tears dined with gusto that would have shocked their sisters in sophisticated society.

Miss Red-Jones was superb, Javan thought, now that her

slim figure had rounded out to the matronly lines of a woman who is in the very act of justifying her existence. There was nothing unseemly about her pregnancy. Glancing at her, Javan recalled a time, twenty years before, when with other lads of his age he had seen a pregnant woman walking along one of the streets of San Francisco. One of the lads had hooted an insulting remark, the others had laughed—but the woman had burst into tears. Such barbarism would be impossible to a primitive man. Miss Red-Jones was big with child, and, though unmarried, she was proud to show herself, knowing that the only sin she could suggest to her neighbours was that of envy. Miss Tern, without a doubt, would be glad to have Toa's baby under her heart.

Javan turned his eyes to Miss Tears. She was a young woman now, he reflected, but still a maid, for Sea Foam had refused to allow her to go through the ceremony of being made into a woman. Javan wondered why it seemed so natural, even graceful, for an exquisite creature like Miss Tears to sit at table with the thigh-bone of a pig in her little hand, biting betimes at the meat while with her other hand she reached in the pan of fowls to extract a drum-stick. "Odd," he thought, "how we become accustomed to such things. Perhaps it all goes back to the environment of our youth. If in childhood we Americans had been accustomed to seeing people eating with their fingers, and then we were transported suddenly to the South Seas where people quaintly used knives and forks, we should look upon this last custom as absurd if not dangerous. The thigh-bone of a pig in the hand of Miss Tears seems quite in harmony with her delicately fashioned body, her snug dress of Fuji silk, her glowing auburn hair. Likewise"—here Javan sighed, reached out with one of his long arms, and removed the head of the albacore intact to his plate—"when she goes to the outer beach with her first lover, whatever happens there will be no more than natural and delightful."

All at once Javan felt tired and depressed. He shook his head sharply and blinked his eyes, as is his habit when he wishes to dispel some troubling thought. "I wish I could do more than play at being a pagan South Sea Islander," he thought, and then, as he cracked the skull of the albacore across the edge of the table and fished out its brains, "I wonder if I should marry Miss Tears? I wonder what kind of a character I should find in her when I had sobered from the intoxication of her body? Is not a man's love for a woman at first fixed on her body; and as that body withers, ages, is not the same love transferred to her character, or, as some would call it, her soul? If I marry Miss Tears, what kind of a character will I find when the intoxicant has worn off, the body has become withered?"

When the guests were gone Javan sent Toa to round up any of the village toddlers who might be about, and when fifty or more of them were in the cook-house he turned them loose on the abundant remnants of the feast. They required no coaxing. With yells, screams, and chortling noises they clawed, crammed, guzzled, and gorged the food, the bigger ones on the benches, the smaller ones on the table itself. Even Javan was alarmed when his favourite, Rachel, tucked away a huge portion of roast pig and then thrust both her hands in the pan of curried fowls to extract divers wings, legs, breasts, and send them, apparently bones and all, the same way as the pork.

When the toddlers had picked the remnants of the feast as clean as a nest of ants pick the meat from a dead lizard, and each one had staggered away sluggishly, a lollipop gripped in his fat hand, Javan told Toa to load the "seven essentials" in his sailing canoe, and again he sailed to Matauea Point. The villagers did not see him again until the first of March, when he returned to the main islet so as to be on hand, should any complications arise, for Miss Red-Jones's parturition.

XXXI

Birth on One of His Majesty's Coral Atolls

It is well known that the cigarette beetle passes in disdain boxes of stogies and five-centers to choose tastefully the finest Habana perfectos; also, as every book collector knows, when turned loose in a library a mere thriller will leave the beetle cold, while it will select for culinary purposes only the rarest signed and numbered editions. Likewise, in the case of babies, Javan Moonlight has noticed that, when given the freedom of the trading station, they will play only with volumes such as his expensive edition of Marcel Proust or his beautifully tooled Shakespeare—and the finer the edition the more diligently will they attend to tearing out *all* the pages. This, Javan claims, is evidence of the aggressive impulse undomesticated. When it has been properly domesticated, some time in mid-childhood, the child will turn his attention to *The Complete Works of Anthony Trollope,* thus evincing less literary discrimination but a greater consideration for the property of his fellow-men.

Javan is fond of infants, or infants are fond of him—he is not quite sure which—for transitory attachments between adults and toddlers vary in intensity, from one party to the other, in exact ratio to the preponderance of such factors as infantile aggressiveness and quantity in lollipops. Howbeit, aware that Javan has a fine library, fragile china teacups and expensive liqueur-glasses, the local mothers find it convenient to park their infants in the trading station. "I'll leave little Johnny here for the day," a mother will murmur as she deposits her precious son on Javan's doorstep; or, "Rachel will help you in the trading station," as she shoos her daughter toward the confectionery depart-

ment. The toddlers, their eyes fixed in an ascertainable direction, willingly submit.

But Javan really likes them. Often he will send his store-boy to herd a half-dozen two-year-olds to the station and up the balcony stairs to the living quarters, afterward superintending the barricading of the stairway with packing-cases and camphorwood chests. And only rarely will a toddler be frightened when first he enters the exotic and palatial living quarters; for soon, when he has examined the framed portraits of Uncle Urban and Aunt Adelina, when he has discovered that lamp-chimneys break to splinters with amusing explosions when cracked against the coral wall, when he has learned that a gooey substance is handed to him at regular intervals, he becomes convinced that Javan is a gentleman to be trusted, and then and there he makes up his mind to visit the fellow frequently.

Babies, according to Javan, are charming because they take life's little details seriously. They take bread and jam seriously, without a shamefaced smirk or even a care whether or not a craving for such delicacies indicates childish weakness. They take the moon seriously, paper hats, hula dancers, firecrackers and boils. They even take Javan seriously, the dears! He loves them for this, if nothing else. Moreover, babies are sincere in their emotional responses. They neither smile nor frown to please the bishop or the hangman. One knows when a baby likes one, when a baby is indifferent, when a baby holds a grudge; and one can dole out the lollipops in strict accordance with their deserts.

"When in the presence of babies," Javan once said, "I can reduce my spoken vocabulary to a few simple words, thus affording opportunity for the complete mental and physical relaxation so important to a white man living in the tropics. A toddler approaches me. 'Good morning,' I say. The toddler replies, 'Ba.' After agreeing with him/her I mention that it is a fine day, whereupon the toddler, again reducing the language to a fundamental monosyllable, re-

plies, 'Ba.' Realising at once that the child has responded to a perfectly natural craving, I hand him/her one lollipop."

Concerning this language of infants, Javan often points out that the inexact chronicler symbolises it with such cryptography as "Pstzzwhtbzz!" This, Javan states, is meaningless, and, furthermore, "the child's first struggle with language is a spectacle both amusing and informative. If the child is angry he may voice his sentiment with a staccato, 'Ba-ba, taka-taka-taka!' each syllable being accented and sprinkled with gunpowder. Later the child uses the first syllable of each word, thus: 'Fa, lu, re,' which means, of course, 'Father, luncheon (is) ready.' Later the sentence develops into a subject and a predicate, with the object dropped; and later still, at about two years, the toddler succeeds in forming a complete sentence, which, incidentally, is a remarkable thing, when one comes to think about it. The mental process is complicated and probably establishes the dividing line between man's thinking and that of the rest of the animals."

Javan has discovered that toddlers of from two to five years, and to a less degree to seven years, have a sense of values which is governed by an article's stimulating effect upon the imagination. Thus the elaborate sail-boats and dolls, which at one time he imported for a few of his favourites, were handled with awe and soon discarded; but a section of coconut husk with a stick driven in it to represent a mast, or a billet of firewood wrapped in a piece of copra sack, were played with and treasured for many days. The life-like boats and dolls, Javan concluded, did not fascinate the toddlers because they did not stimulate their imaginations: one does not play at having a thing if one actually has it. The imported toys were so real that the toddlers were unable to *imagine* that they owned boats and babies: simply by looking at the toys they knew they owned the genuine articles (if one may term a baby an article). Conversely, the sections of coconut husk and the

billets of firewood required fancied elaboration to make them real; and this elaboration, dreaming, imagery, inspired inventiveness, actuated the delight the toddlers derived from their playthings.

At moments of extravagant speculation Javan has conceived that pleasure in a crude toy has its inception in the unconscious mind, while pleasure from a life-like toy originates in the conscious mind. It may be that the crude toy has a symbolic significance which awakens a latent racial memory. Perhaps the boat is a symbol of escape, the doll a symbol of immortality. But when the fetish-toys are too elaborate the child's attention is transferred from the symbolism to the structural details. He is concerned with the rudder, sails, spars, the eyebrows, nostrils, lips: there is an intellectual rather than a spiritual interest.

"Dislike for babies is easily understood," Javan said at another time, "but there is no excuse for the man who dislikes his own baby—it exposes only his objectionable character. Rare is the man who can love the babies of other men, but not so rare the woman. Also, rare is the childless man who can appreciate a father's love for his child. Yet this love is easily explained: the father is better acquainted with the baby, and thus has discovered a definite character, partially formed by himself, which is not recognisable to the childless man. The father knows what emotions are stirring in the baby's mind. When the infant stares as blankly as an adobe wall there is sullen anger; when he screams at the top of his voice, tears streaming down his cheeks, his little lips curled, there is the same attempt at coercion which he will use in later life when he bellows at the board of directors, with the slight difference that at eighteen months he wants bread and jam, in middle life a limousine. When the toddler lisps 'La-lop,' he is really abbreviating the word 'Lollipop,' even as in later life he will abbreviate such a sentence as 'What is the matter; did you ask him?' into, 'Smatterjaskum?' And when the child chortles the oft-quoted, 'Blub-ul-ub-ul-ub,'

flipping betimes his lower lip with his index finger, the father is aware—no! positive, dead certain!—that the little rascal is simply remarking: 'You're a good sport, Papa!'

"Some time ago Mama spoke of innocent babies. I do not know what brought up the subject, for I never pay the slightest attention to what the garrulous old woman is saying, but the phrase, 'innocent babies' caught my attention because of its absurdity. Innocent babes, piffle! A baby is amusing chiefly because he is hard-boiled. Evil, as I may have said before, is a positive force, and it is therefore inherent in its elementary and undisguised form in babies: it is modified to the negative form of good only through spankings, jail sentences, and moral dehortations. All babies are little criminals. They grind their teeth (or gums) in sleep; they gloat over dismembering a lizard; they are consummate gluttons, liars, and thieves; they baste one another with intent to maim or kill—the dears! Only as they grow out of childhood is their aggressive impulse domesticated. Then they learn to grind their teeth (or gums) only as a public-spirited gesture when the Democrats win the Presidency, to dismember only in the slaughter-house or on the vivisecting table, to cram themselves with both fists only at the pie-eating contest, to lie only to their hostess when she has asked them if they enjoyed their dinner, to steal only in strictly business ventures, to kill only to uphold the burden of the white man. This is domesticating the aggressive impulse. Personally, I prefer it undomesticated, as in the nomads of the steppes, the toddlers of Danger Island. There is a saving grace in sin unashamed."

Here Javan paused to limber his throat with a glass of his excellent brew; then he continued: "I have said that the Danger Island toddlers are little criminals—but they are not selfish. Some years ago I read, in an article on Danger Island by a Seventh Day Adventist missionary, that 'after the evening service we gave each child a ship's biscuit, and later we were astonished to find the little ones

breaking their biscuits and dividing them with the children of the other congregations.' One infers that the missionary was astonished by the contrast (tacitly conceded) between the generosity of primitive children and the selfishness of civilised children. Yet it is not at all remarkable. On Danger Island the economic pattern encourages unselfishness. Each person has an equal share in the island's produce; even the land is owned communally. It is customary to divide the coconut and the taro harvests. When a turtle is caught only its head belongs to the hunter: the rest of the reptile is divided equally among the villagers. One might add many et ceteras, all of which would demonstrate that, from boyhood onward, the child is taught by custom to share his property with others. An opposite condition prevails in civilisation, where self-preservation depends on selfishness."

Javan has observed that the Danger Island toddlers thrive remarkably well with little attention, and develop thereby that rarest and finest of virtues, self-reliance. Often an infant, aged three, will come tramping up the balcony steps, and walk into the living quarters to make himself at home with a volume of *Le Temps Retrouvé*, and, on inquiring, Javan will learn that the parents are at Leeward Village, a mile away. The toddler may spend the day with Javan, sharing the latter's dinner and afternoon tea, even drinking a few glasses of home-brew as a gesture of good-fellowship. Then he will wander away, in the opposite direction from home, to visit and gossip with other casual acquaintances, to splash in the lagoon, to bunk-up for the night in any house that is convenient. Perhaps next morning the child will remember that he has some parents over in Leeward Village; but it is quite as likely that he will catch the odour of grilling fish from the direction of Windward Village, and so, of course, toddle off in that direction. He may continue the rounds for two or three days, or until accidentally he finds himself at home again. The parents will not be alarmed: they gadded about

a-plenty in their own childhood. Some neighbours will have told them they saw young hopeful fighting with the constable's brat over in Central Village, and this will satisfy the parents that their son is taking good care of himself as well as of the family reputation. There are no kidnappers, perverts, or drunken motorists to threaten the child's wicked life.

"Ah!" Javan once declaimed, "to have many toddlers—little white ones and black ones, red ones, yellow ones and brown ones—only the preliminary detail is so exhausting in this climate. Life, life! Not one aspect of it is perfect. If only we could snap our fingers and produce, with the facility of a Huxleian *Brave New World,* without all the incumbent rites and rituals, local ordinances and federal laws, toddlers, aged twelve months!"

It will now be evident to even the dullest reader that the "confinement" of Miss Red-Jones was a matter of importance to Javan Moonlight. Another toddler, another potential recipient of lollipops, another individual who might take him seriously, was about to appear on the village scene.

Miss Red-Jones had her baby on the fifth of March. This date was impressed on Javan's mind by two associations: first, it was the day of the beginning of the equinoctial storm; second, he had counted back nine months and five days, to June the first of the preceding year, curious to establish when the child had been conceived. He had been at Matauea at the time, he recalled, and it was before the period of Miss Red-Jones's promiscuity, so the baby was Toa's, or just possibly George's. Toa need not worry about it being the child of the Old Man.

The labour pains began early in the morning of March the fourth. The prognosis, according to Pau, was favourable. All the tapus had been obeyed. Miss Red-Jones had eaten no sea crabs, fowls, or coconuts from bunches formed tightly pressed; Toa had not pierced or struck anything. The labour pains were severe from the beginning.

The belief that primitive women undergo childbirth with little discomfort is a myth invented by the same inflated type of mind that sublimates itself by claiming that, in other ways, the savage is of a different genus than the civilised man. How gratified this megalomaniacal type would be if it were discovered that the brown man has one less pair of chromosomes or one less pair of genes than the white man! Javan has not known a single Danger Island woman to escape the most agonising torture, but he has known several women to die from sheer pain and exhaustion.

Miss Red-Jones's pains continued for two days and a night, while she squatted in a floorless shelter on the lagoon beach, in a huddled posture, her knees flexed slightly, her feet braced against one of the shelter's posts, surrounded by scores of the neighbours—relatives, friends, the curious, even the village children. For on this island there are no storks, or angels. A child of six knows as much about coition, pregnancy, and parturition as does the average civilised man. There are no absurd myths to confuse their little heads, so that, in puberty, the true biological process will come to them as a dangerous shock. To the Reverend Mrs. Johns this precocity is "disgusting"; but one fancies that parturition suggests to her aberrated mind a certain form of physical love that was shamefully indulged in some two hundred and eighty days before the birth. The stupid islanders are not given to such nice correlation between cause and effect.

George supported Miss Red-Jones throughout the labour, even as he had supported her on a former but less painful occasion, and even as he will support her on some later day—in the distant future, we hoped—when she is dying. Permitting George to do this was a tacit admission that Toa was the child's father, but it did not imply that Miss Red-Jones would return to him. It pleased Toa nevertheless. For days afterward his old impulsive self returned, and he even spoke with some show of confidence of the

time when he would marry her. George's office was simple but required strength. As Miss Red-Jones sat with her feet braced against one of the posts, George sat snugly behind her, his back against another post, his legs outstretched on either side of her hips, the heels of his hands pressed firmly in the small of her back. It may be that this relieved her by deadening some nerve centre, or perhaps it diverted her attention from the other pain. Be that as it may, she would have been poor in friends indeed had she no strong man, other than her lover or husband, to support her. These last are never trusted with the task, for their own emotion leaves them too weak: it is one of the ineluctable obligations of the bosom friend.

At the end of the second day Pau decided that evil spirits were at work. Something drastic must be done. The Tahitian savants were consulted, the *rupé* was chanted, and the Christian god was evoked to exorcise the heathen spirits. Finally, as still the child did not come, the poor girl was told to confess her sins in an effort to drive away the evil spirits, though why this should be effective Javan could not understand, unless it was that the malicious fiends, on hearing the confession, would rush away blushing in spiritual modesty Miss Red-Jones confessed every one she could remember, and they were many and all of the same nature. Immediately after the confession, at nine o'clock at night, the child was born.

After the birth Miss Red-Jones relaxed in George's arms, limp, exhausted, but happy, while Pau prayed long and fervently, leaving the child to its own resources. Then he cut the umbilical cord with a rusty old knife, and ligated it, about six inches from the navel, with a strip of old rag. Pau then waited for the placenta. If it came soon after the child, Miss Red-Jones might expect her next baby to be a girl; but as it was delayed for about twenty minutes, Pau informed her that next time she would present her man with another son. The placenta was buried in a shallow hole, and a coconut was planted on top of it. The nut,

grown to a tree, would be a prestige symbol, *akairo,* for the man; the hole being shallow would ensure that Miss Red-Jones conceive again. Had contraception been desired the placenta would have been buried in a deep hole, with a slab of coral on top of it. Finally both mother and son were carried to the lagoon, where they were bathed, then taken to Sea Foam's house. The population of the island had been increased by one, without the benefit of obstetricians, trained midwives, hospitals, blood tests, a scientifically balanced diet, modern sanitation, antiseptics or anæsthetics.

That night the equinoctial storm was raging over Danger Island. The houses were closed, the streets deserted. Not a light flickered in the three villages save only for the hurricane-lantern in Mr. Moonlight's trading station.

XXXII

The Point of Smoking Seas

The traders of His Majesty's few remaining outposts are not wholly contented, and this is because they are of the tribe of the restless. But they are not forever eating their hearts away with nostalgia; they do not dream of the lands of their birth, regret them, or scarcely ever think about them. It is thus in the ordinary course of Javan Moonlight's life; but during stormy weather his mind will turn betimes to those mystic lands which lie far beyond the horizon. This may be because the high winds and heavy combers remind him that he lives on a tiny bank of sand which, each hurricane season, is in peril of annihilation. These winds have made up in China and are bound for the Horn; these seas have flowed thousands of miles before piling over the Danger Island reef—some day they will wash the island away, an incident in their march to the heavy bombardment, months hence, of the rugged walls of Tierra del Fuego. Aye; Danger Island is a morsel of sand precariously placed in the midst of a great water: there must be larger and more secure lands, someplace, somewhere.

To a Danger Islander there are two dominant elements in the physical world: their island and the sea. The sky is a part of their island-world. Often one hears them ask: "What are the stars like in other lands? . . . Is the sky blue? . . . Are there clouds? . . . Is there a moon?" The lagoon is a part of Danger Island; but the sea is a thing extraneous. They know that one may sail countless leagues over the sea until their island is lost. They believe the wind and the sea to be related, for one reflects the other's

mood. They know there are other islands in the sea; but these islands, in their conception, are a part of the sea. Thus they call foreigners "People from land-parts (of the sea)." Danger Island represents food, shelter, security; the sea represents peril.

Whenever a heavy storm sweeps over Danger Island the people recall The Great Death. During this gale, Javan, Sea Foam, and Bones talked about it. They were standing by the copra house, twenty yards from the lagoon. Javan had gone to the house to decide if there were anything he could do to strengthen it, for the lagoon waves were sweeping at times under its floor and beyond it to within a few yards of the trading station.

"The storm comes late this year," Bones grunted, thrusting out his lips and sniffing at the wind.

Javan glanced at him. "What a beast of a man!" he thought, and then he wondered that Sea Foam and Bones should be standing there in perfect good-fellowship; but the thought soon passed, for he knew that Sea Foam's Christian puritanism was scarcely skin-deep. The parson might preach against incontinence, but he could *feel* no pain at the thought of his daughter's promiscuity.

"Yes," Sea Foam replied; "the big gale generally comes in February. *'And the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a great tempest in the sea so that the ship was like to be broken'* (Jonah i, 4). . . . Why is it, Javan, that February is the stormy month?"

Javan shrugged his shoulders. The low atmospheric pressure had depressed him; he felt mentally too exhausted even to attempt an explanation.

"Well," Sea Foam ventured, "I have been thinking about it, and I have decided that we have bad weather in February because it is the shortest month in the year."

"That sounds logical," Javan agreed. "You'd better preach a sermon about it. It's good form nowadays to discuss scientific matters in church."

"The Great Death was in February," Bones grunted.

"You remember the chant that says it was during the morning rising of Maui's fish-hook? . . . There goes The Name's woman, Javan. How fat she is getting!" and again he thrust out his lips and sniffed at the wind.

Sea Foam clucked his tongue on the roof of his mouth. "Not so fat at Wanunga," he said.

"Yes?"

"She was so wide," the parson went on, extending his arms to describe a fathom, "that two men could not join hands around her."

"She was a woman greedy-for-men," Bones said, with a grin. "But none of the men would have her, she was that fat!" He laughed in his lecherous way, while Sea Foam clucked his tongue and made a table-brushing gesture. Above them the wind sounded in a sustained scream; the lagoon waves washed far up the beach, sometimes to within a pace of where they were standing.

"In the chant about her," Bones went on, "it says she would prowl along the outer beach, hunting for youths and maidens, and when she caught them love-making she would throw coconuts at them, her eyes becoming green with envy and her teeth showing, like a cat's.

"As she grew older she became fatter and fatter, and with every new layer of fat her greed for men became hotter; but the strong men she hungered for hid when they heard the thump of her great feet in the groves.

"Then, as no one would have her, she began to hate men; and her jealousy of the young women made her belly hot against them. She brooded revenge, but for long she was afraid to kill. Then one day, when an old man had shamed her, she found her courage. She made a great wreath of pandanus nuts and flowers, and when night came she took it to the Sacred Place of Matala, where the big stone goddess Taua stood. She put the wreath around the goddess, and she asked her to destroy the people.

" 'Let there be a hurricane wind!' she prayed. 'Let there be thunder and lightning and a great wind! Let the sea

rise! Let the sea rise and drown the people! Let there be a great death!' "

"He-he-he!" Sea Foam laughed. "The heathens! They prayed to a stone idol! The *great* goddess Taua! *'Every man is become brutish in his knowledge; every founder is put to shame by his graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no truth in them'* (Jeremiah x, 14)." Then he turned his head to glance toward the south-east corner-stone of Javan's copra house, a tremendous lump of coral that was virtually saving the house.

"Biff!" Bones ejaculated suddenly, once again thrusting out his lips. "The wind came like that!" and he slapped one leathery hand against the other. "The thunder! The lightning! The black sky! The wind tore up the coconut trees and carried them out to sea like kites that have broken loose! The seas rose and swept across the whole island! There was a great noise! It was The Great Death, the hurricane of Wanunga!

"When morning came, of the two thousand people on the island only fourteen men and a few women were alive!"

"And Wanunga?"

"She lived," Bones grunted, then tilted back his head to glance squint-eyed at the coconut fronds lashing wildly. "She was too fat for the seas to budge her!"

"He-he-he, Taua!" Sea Foam laughed, and again turned his eyes to the corner-stone. "There she is: the big corner-stone: that's the goddess Taua! When you built the shed the Central Village men couldn't find enough big stones, so they went to the *Sacred* Place of Matala (where I keep my pigs) and dug up the goddess Taua!"

A vicious squall raged over the island. Javan left Sea Foam and Bones, who had moved under the eaves of the lee side of the copra house; the house itself he left in the protection of the goddess Taua, determined, though, to return her to Matala. This was the first time he had heard of Wanunga, but he knew that The Great Death was his-

torical, for every man on Danger Island can trace his ancestors back to the fourteen who had survived, point out the graves of the fourteen, and the graves of their descendants in straight lines of tomb-stones. Wanunga's hurricane must have been of terrible violence. It built up seas massive enough to sweep away three and a half miles of solid land. Formerly there had been a strip of land between the main islet and Ko; after the hurricane there remained of it only a few coral boulders. Finally, of the fourteen who survived, one was called The Name, and he is an ancestor, in direct succession, fifteen generations back, of Javan's branch storekeeper.

Late in the afternoon Javan left the trading station to walk across the main islet to Teauma—Point of Smoking Seas. There can be no spot on earth more desolate than Teauma, for it in itself is the anti-type of the word. A heap of bleached fragments of coral fringed by foaming reef, it juts, a last point forward, into the empty sea. A quarter of a mile landward from the extreme end of the point, the stunted magnolia bushes appear among the rocks; farther back are the atoll trees, broken-limbed and twisted by many a gale; and farther back still are the coconut groves and the taro-beds. Seaward, a half-mile of sunken reef gives the point its name of Smoking Seas, for across this reef the combers rear, break, churn, collide, bellow in wild surges of confused water. On windless days the mist from the breaking combers rises a hundred feet or more, sometimes to obscure the sea beyond; but when the wind is fresh the mist drifts low over the water, like the smoke of many fires. Years ago Bones swam into this madly confused shoal to save his first woman, who had been washed over the barrier reef. It was a feat equal to swimming the rapids below Niagara Falls, and it will be remembered long after the Old Man's gallantries are forgotten.

To-day the violence of the wind, the noise, the gigantic seas gave the point an aspect of awful grandeur; and Javan liked it so, for he needed direct contact with violence to

turn his mind from the morbid thoughts the low atmospheric pressure had provoked. Whenever the barometer falls a few millimetres below normal Javan's mind is troubled by a vague dread. He is not mad at such times, for he is able to carry on his business and talk in a rational way, but he is conscious of being on the verge of breakdown, and he is subject to hallucinations like the one of Marcel Proust stalking along the outer reef.

Javan rested on a coral boulder close to the end of the point. It seemed to him the loneliest spot in the world—lonelier than Cape Horn, the mountains of the moon, intermundane space: a place of savage loneliness. With the village only a mile away he fancied this place had never been known by man; not only was it distant in place, but in time it belonged to a pre-Cambrian day when there was sea and land and stormy wind—movement without life; and it belonged to that day now, for time had stood still on this last point forward.

Presently rain-drops struck the gravel at an acute angle; a huge squall seemed to open its jaws, bellow, blow with hurricane violence. The rain pricked Javan's skin. He lowered his head, pulled his hat over his ears, and thrust his clenched hands in his armpits. Then, with body tense, he listened to the familiar demon of the squall screaming in a sustained and exultant howl. Even the roar of breaking seas was lost in the clamour of the wind.

Huddled on the boulder, hypnotised by the unrelenting squall, feeling a peculiar pleasure in his drenched clothes and the sting of the rain-drops, Javan let his mind wander. He pictured himself at sea in the same wind, excited by danger, his feet braced on deck, his hands gripping the deck-house coaming. Then he recalled a voyage he had made to North America in a trading schooner, and was struck by the contrast between this storm of the tropics and the misty rain, the pall of fog in the North Pacific. The latter had been a moribund presence that depressed the spirit; it had nothing in common with this virile and

dangerous tropical squall, this hurricane gust that uprooted trees, bit into one's flesh, a wild animal with sharp claws and teeth. And he remembered the rain of western Samoa, a different thing again, a rain that fell straight down in big oily globules, that struck imperceptibly, like snowflakes, but which soaked one instantly. The rain of Samoa had been an improvident downpour: billions of blobs of cloud protoplasm toppling to destruction, and without a breath of wind.

The squall was at its highest now, roaring across the point in a sustained detonation. The air seemed to vibrate, to be alive with electric currents. Suddenly Javan became conscious of his finger-nails biting in the palms of his hands, his teeth clenched, his toes bent downward against the soles of his shoes. There was a dull pain in the back of his neck; the bombardment of raindrops was scarcely perceptible. His mind seemed light and free; he was a trifle giddy, certainly half mad.

He raised his head. The wind had died down with the suddenness characteristic of squalls travelling in the body of a gale. The sun had set; the clouds were dull red and even the air was suffused with lurid refulgence. The smoke from the breaking combers was like dust from iron-mould; the boom of the surf came loudly now. Turning his head, with the sure premonition that someone was approaching, he saw, not ten yards away, sharply defined against the ensanguined sky, a stooped man, yellow and wrinkled, beady-eyed, with beetling brows, and dressed in a drab-coloured cloak, a corner of which was flung over his head in Bedouin manner.

"I know you," Javan muttered. "You are stooped, for you have borne much; you are thin, for you have lived on a handful of maize and a cup of camel's milk; your skin is wrinkled and yellow, for the sun of *Arabia Deserta* has sucked from it the last drop of moisture. You are Charles Doughty."

The stooped man approached with rapid steps, and

stopped directly in front of Javan; then leaning forward, "Your name?" he asked, knitting his brows.

"Moonlight."

Something like a leer passed across the old man's face, but it was as indefinite as a shadow; and to Javan, now, even the man seemed a shadow filtered from the rust-red sunset clouds. Then Javan broke into a hysterical laugh, closed his eyes and clapped his hands on his temples. The wind was blowing again, lightly at first, but with rapidly increasing force. It was blowing from China and bound for the Horn. The world was an indivisible unity and he a part of it: there was no escape. He opened his eyes. The little man was jog-trotting down the beach in the direction from which he had come, more indistinct with each step he took till at last he had dissolved in the ruddle-dyed spray above the western reef.

It was deep twilight now. A great comber broke across the sunken reef, rushed through the shallows and streamed up the beach. Javan stood upright on the boulder, but even then the wash of the comber came to his knees. He waited till the water had subsided. A gust of wind struck him with a violence that seemed brutal. He staggered from the boulder, stumbled toward the shore bush and through it to the rain-dripping jungle. There the night seemed to lower down on him suddenly. The darkness was absolute. For some moments he stood still wondering if he should return to the beach and follow it the five miles around the island to the villages.

He slipped off his canvas shoes, then moved forward slowly, feeling the path beneath his feet.

"That was the second one in a year," he muttered, as he groped forward. "First there was Marcel Proust on the outer reef, and now Charles Doughty on the Point of Smoking Seas. . . . I wonder if I am mad?"

In the open space by the taro beds gusts of wind swooped down to strike him so violently that he must pause to regain his footing and his sense of direction. In

the groves there was not a breath of wind, but only a few feet above him the coconut-trees beat their black wings against the sky. "They are prehistoric birds," he thought. "They are winged mammals howling in a discordant chorus, beating their black wings against the sky. . . . I wonder what I should do to be normal? Stop drinking home-brew—read detective novels—marry?" Then he laughed again, with the sudden realisation that he did not want to be normal. "Were I normal I should no longer be Javan Moonlight: it would be death."

He entered the clearing of Matala, the Sacred Place where the goddess Taua had stood. He skirted another taro bed, climbed on to higher ground, passed the church, and came to the trading station. Toa was waiting for him at the head of the balcony stairs.

"The Name is dying," Toa said. "He has sent for you."

PUBLIC DOMAIN

XXXIII

Death on One of His Majesty's Coral Atolls

There are dozens of little houses in the groves, full to the tie-beams with sections of canoes, each section waiting for a year or a day, to carry some Danger Islander on his last voyage. Other of the canoe coffins are still afloat. They are under trial for the important voyage when they will be piloted to the land beyond the horizon, where the trade wind is born, where dead men abide.

With a rice-bag hung over his hurricane lantern to keep the wind from extinguishing it, Javan hurried to The Name's house. He found his branch storekeeper stretched out on a mat, clothed for the grave, his head on a wooden pillow, a patchwork quilt spread over him. His eyelids were round and fixed, but his eyes moved incessantly: they seemed the only animated part of him; they seemed disembodied.

King-of-the-Sky sat cross-legged in the exact centre of the room. He had been talking in an angry tone, but he fell silent when Javan entered, lowered his head, and scowled. Along the walls twenty or more of the neighbours, Pau and Bosun-woman among them, sat in huddled postures, their backs bent forward slightly as though they were watching the dying man's eyes, waiting for them to become fixed and glassy, when the death chant would commence. Bosun-woman's lips were moving; sometimes she would mumble a few words loudly enough for The Name to hear: she was rehearsing the chant which soon she would wail over his body.

Javan sensed that the people feared The Name. Their postures were tense; their eyes shifted as though they

anticipated the fear they would feel when he was dead. The Name was the kind of man that would haunt the groves before at last he sailed away in his coffin. He would put centipedes and sea urchins in the stomachs of his descendants; and many a youth would see grinning at him from the shadows of the hernandia-trees, two great circular eyes, cantankerous and malignant.

"I am dying, Javan," The Name said hoarsely. "These boils are killing me. I have sent for you to make my will."

"Boils won't kill you," Javan said, with a weak attempt at a smile.

An irascible note came into The Name's voice. "They are killing me," he repeated. "For years I have known that they would kill me," and then, probably unaware of the veracity of his words: "I want to die, so I am going to die."

Time and again Javan has known his neighbours to embark on the long canoe voyage for no other reason than that they are tired of life—or that they wish to join the companions of their youth, all of whom have sailed on before them.

Javan sat beside The Name and started to make out the will.

"To-morrow," The Name said, "you will cut the lashings on my sailing canoe. You will take off the outrigger, the cross booms, and the washboards, and give them to my elder brother. Then you will lay me in the middle section of the hull and bury me at the foot of the grave of my father. You will bury with me my Bible, my bonito hook, and my spectacles, and you will plant over my grave a coconut from the tree that was planted on my placenta."

A grumbled complaint came from King-of-the-Sky, but The Name only raised his voice to a thin shrill scream. The front section of the canoe, he went on, was to be given to his younger brother, the fore-middle section to his unmarried daughter, the after-middle section to Toa. Toa was also to receive the branch-store and the money-bag

full of silver shillings, while the bag full of pennies, threepenny and sixpenny bits was to be divided among his male relatives. Then the small gear was distributed: a fish-line here, a few fish-hooks there; to one relative a hammer, to another a saw, to another a roll of sennit, or a mat.

Presently, the last of his possessions was bequeathed and noted by Javan. Not once had he mentioned his wife. Javan glanced at her and recalled her holiday squabbles with Bosun-woman. A sour, fat woman, younger than her husband, cowered but bitter with suppressed vindictiveness, she substantiated superfluously the exact law that in every group of humans there must be a female trouble-maker. Javan claims that in each community, the world over, there is an evil spirit who possesses the body of one of the women. Let that woman die, and, within twenty-four hours, the evil spirit will shift its lodgings to a body of another woman, seemingly chosen at random—a woman who may have been, a few hours before, a paragon of the gentler virtues, but now is transformed overnight into a shrew.

Javan's attention was turned to King-of-the-Sky, the brother-in-law of The Name. "What are you leaving your wife's mother and your wife's father?" the Sky King roared, with an angry gesture toward the two old people.

The Name's eyelids seemed to pucker with the verjuice from his eyes. "Ah!" he gasped in a husky whisper. "I have fed them and clothed them. I have given the old man tobacco and I have cut threepenny pieces of soap for the old woman—now that I am dying I leave them my wife."

He laughed in a way that sounded like a death-rattle. "And my wife, that good woman," he whispered, "I leave her my ten-centime piece."

No laugh came from him this time. He seemed exhausted. He was breathing laboriously, as though fighting against the death which, having longed for, he now feared.

From then on there was wrangling and cajoling, all

of which The Name ignored. King-of-the-Sky was loud and vindictive. He neither begged nor threatened, but he used hard words for a dying man's presence. Often he pounded his fist on the floor, and there seemed to be passion in his voice. The middle section of the canoe, he said, should be left to him. He went back into the genealogy of the family to explain who had planted the tree from which the section had been made, who had pruned it so it would grow straight, who had cut it down, made it into a canoe section—all of which proved, by some obscure process of reasoning, that the section should be his. In a word, King-of-the-Sky was demanding the coffin of a dying man, but he justified himself by shouting that a narrower coffin would hold The Name's body, while for him, the biggest man on the island, a section such as the one in The Name's canoe would be needed.

There were other demands, accusations, all of which seemed sordid if not brutal to Javan. He tried to distract his attention by listening to the roar of the wind, by thinking it would be a wild night for the dead man to put to sea. Then he remembered that The Name would not be put to sea for many a night: he would stay on Danger Island to keep fresh his memory by evil practices. Javan was relieved when, after a long outburst from King-of-the-Sky, The Name asked him, with a glance as expressive as the words which he no longer could utter, to let him sign the will. When Javan had placed a pencil in his hand The Name summoned his last strength to scrawl his name. Then, thrusting the document in his pocket, Javan left quickly.

The wind struck him full in the face as he forced his way through it, leaning far forward, digging his toes in the road like a man climbing a mountain. The wind was a palpable substance through which he had to cut a channel. Once he felt water rushing ankle-deep past his bare feet, then subsiding back toward where he knew the lagoon must be. He stubbed his feet against one of the

coral slabs that border the road, turned a little to his left, and again forced his way forward. A hundred yards ahead he could see a shaft of light from the upper floor of his house cutting through the blackness to project an oblong skiagraph of a tombstone on the schoolhouse wall.

Javan knew that this storm was not a hurricane, but also he knew that the equinoctial storms sometimes rise to nearly hurricane force. At such times the people leave their homes to take refuge on the high land in the Sacred Place of Matala. Probably, many of the old people were there now, as well as the mothers with suckling babies. Miss Red-Jones might be there, her back to the wind, her child sheltered by her body.

He turned from the road to the lee of the trading station. At the back of the building the wind struck him again, but in another moment he had climbed to the balcony and entered the living quarters. With a liqueur glass and a bottle of cognac flavoured with Benedictine, he moved to the front balcony, where he sat in the shelter of a screen of fronds that had been lashed against the windward posts.

The stream of light from the open doorway gave him a feeling of security. It laid a sharply defined band of yellow across the balcony floor; it materialised from the darkness and held in suspension a section of the railing, then projected it across the road to lay it in shadow against the side of the schoolhouse. Above the schoolhouse, above where the thatching stood in rows held upright by the wind, a tall coconut-tree, so shadowy that it seemed the ghost of a tree conjured out of the darkness by the light from the trading station, leaned away from the wind, its fronds flung out as straight and stiff as steel rods.

"What a sordid attitude in the presence of death!" Javan thought, his mind turning to the scene in The Name's house. "He was the meanest man on the island, but still they might have respected him. Think of having people quarrel over your possessions when you are dying! It is like telling you they don't give a whoop for you, but

are definitely concerned about your old shoes and the rest of your gear."

Javan filled his glass and drank the liqueur slowly. It warmed his blood and mellowed his brain; he knew that if he drank even moderately it would intoxicate him. He felt better after the drink. The wind did not seem so vicious; even The Name's relatives were not so meanly avaricious. For some moments he stared over the schoolhouse roof, his eyes fixed on the lone coconut-tree. He believed it was leaning over a little farther now. He poured a second glass of liqueur and drank it at a gulp, then up-ended the glass over the neck of the bottle. When again he turned to glance over the schoolhouse roof the coconut-tree was gone. Its disappearance scarcely interested him, for the tree had been no more real than the ghost of Charles Doughty. Nothing was real on a night like this. He wondered when the schoolhouse roof would go—his own roof—but found himself indifferent. Then his mind turned from the storm back to the dying man.

He recalled an article he had read a few nights before, describing death in Japan. The author had said that the dead remain with the living, members of the household: they do not pass over the threshold into another room, but remain in the room with the living.

"It is thus at Danger Island," Javan thought. "Here the spirits of dead men are in continual communication with the living—at least, so the neighbours claim; and I believe them, for why should I alone see the ghosts of dead men? No doubt it is a nightly occurrence with them. There are no forgotten dead on Danger Island. A dead man's virtues and vices are talked about for years to come; his grandchildren are told that they must not steal coconuts, for then grandpa will be angry. And, in The Name's case, the young unmarried, hurrying through the groves, will see him sitting moodily on Jonesy's memory stone, his owl's eyes glinting in the night; and the bird netters

will claim that he has joined them as of yore, to perch in the pandanus trees and croak to the black terns. Aye; there are no forgotten dead."

Sensing that something untoward was happening, he moved forward to glance over the balcony railing. On either side of the station, dimly lit by reflected light from the schoolhouse, a wall of water fanned silently into the roadway. They met directly below him, rose in a sharp ridge which the wind caught and hurled into the darkness; then the water receded with the same uncanny noiselessness, leaving in the roadway pools which in turn were scooped up by the wind.

Returning to the lee of the windscreen, he let his mind wander back to the beginning of history on Danger Island. There had been two thousand people on the island, he recalled—as many as the place could support. When the population increased to a larger number canoes were rigged, and a hundred or more of the young men would sail away to search for a new promised land. Then Wanunga had prayed to the goddess Taua; The Great Death had swept over the island, to destroy all save fourteen men and a few women and children.

Immediately after the hurricane, each of the fourteen men selected from the now sea-swept sand and gravel, a plot of land for his own burial and that of his descendants. It was the *first act* of each man, which demonstrates the importance he placed on a permanent home for the dead. The Name chose for his burial ground a hillock about twenty feet high and some two hundred yards from where the trading station now stands. To-day it is covered with graves; and The Name's clan can pass through the graveyard and name each man, woman, child, and stillborn baby that lies there, tell considerable about his life, give a complete record of his contemporaries. One large grave will be that of Winangaro, on either hand will be the graves of his daughters and their children born out of wedlock; at his feet the graves of his sons, and at his head

the graves of his father, his uncles, and aunts—and so on, back to the originator of the family at the time of The Great Death.

Now it may be seen why the dead at Danger Island have not passed from memory as they would have done in a land where their memory crumbles with the crumbling of their monuments, their names are in many cases lost with the fourth generation. On Danger Island ancestors twenty generations back live in the minds of the present population, even as The Name will live an hour after his death.

The Name is going to the graveyard, but only to join a great assemblage of people as familiar to him as his own contemporaries; and the people he leaves behind him will see him often, staring round-eyed from the darkness. They will talk about him when they use his adze to hollow a new canoe; they will tell of the time he galvanised the congregation with a new metaphor for sin: "Too heav!" and it is possible that they will turn their heads to ask for verification from an invisible The Name who is hovering close by. "Isn't that right, The Name?" they will ask. "Didn't you say the sins of the neighbours were 'too heav'?" and, "Aye; too heav!" will be whispered back from amongst the rustling coconut-fronds. Witch Doctor Pau will shoo him out of the house when he has maliciously put a sea urchin in some descendant's body. Toa's children will play on his grave while their mother tells them that Grandpapa The Name lies beneath them, and great-grandpapa Pati is over there, and little sister Vaevae lies at one side. And here, children, in the little plot with the grass, is where you are going to lie, all in a row, and with mother over there in the next hillock, in the burying ground of her father.

When King-of-the-Sky complained about the will he was doing no more than The Name expected him to do. The Sky King is a giant of a man: there are few canoe logs that will hold him, and so he is concerned about his burial.

He covets the middle section of The Name's canoe. Failing to obtain it or an equally large coffin, he may be buried wrapped in a bundle of mats. Moreover, a narrow coffin would suffice for The Name. So King-of-the-Sky complains, and with a fair amount of reason, but to no avail.

"I wonder what Toa thinks about inheriting a coffin?" Javan mused. "When he was a baby Mrs. The Name must have laid him in that section more than once. In his boyhood he must have bailed water out of it, leaning far over, his eyes on the very wood that was destined to hold his bones. But Toa has a healthy mind. For him to be told, 'This is your coffin,' would be no more painful than to be told, 'This is your cook-house.' It is only a fact which he should remember lest death catch him without a canoe to carry him to the land beyond the horizon."

A squall had howled over the island, pelted the station with rain and, swirling around the windscreen, flung spray in Javan's face. Then the squall had died down, and suddenly the seas on the outer reef had resumed their bombardment—great cannonades reverberating across the island till it seemed to Javan that they shook the trading station. The wings of coconut-trees hung limp and ragged; water pattered from the roof of the station to the puddles, beneath; and suddenly, piercing through the still night air, eerie, terrifying, came the scream of The Name's woman. Javan Moonlight shuddered. He pushed his feet outward against the floor, braced his back firmly against the wall, as though preparing himself for some bodily shock. Again and again the scream sounded. It was no lament nor scream of terror: it was like the howl of a wild animal, full of malice, calling its brood to a feast of carrion, voicing evil into the blackness.

The screaming increased as the woman approached; then gradually words were formed, the words became verses, and Javan heard The Name's woman wailing in a voice inhuman:

The red lips fly through the village,
My tongue as hot as a flame!
My gift-man; my beloved!
Alas! my man, you are dead!

The widow's lips were red with the word of death; her tongue was a flame burning the ears of the villagers with the cry that The Name was no more.

Then the chant was lost in deliberate piercing screams. They seemed vindictive, malicious; and Javan sensed that in the cowered woman's mind was the thought: "Now he is dead, and I am free! I am doing the duty of a widow. I am walking through the villages, screaming the word of his death. But I am glad! I am free!"

A moment later she passed before the trading station. Javan could see her clearly outlined against the gravestone figure on the schoolhouse wall, her great body clothed in black lawn which reached from her ankles to her neck and wrists. Her head was thrown back. A shawl of new and expensive cloth was over her hair. She walked slowly, screaming with scarcely a pause for breath; and then, as she passed from the light into the darkness, the screaming again resolved into words:

The jungle has closed about me;
I am groping alone and afraid,
My feet unsure, my arms outstretched—
Alas! my man, you are dead!

XXXIV

A Partnership for Business and Crime

"You have great responsibilities," Javan said. He had risen from the counter and was pacing the back porch, while Toa stood in the doorway. "You have great responsibilities in conducting your late father's business; but I have pondered your difficulties and found a solution. We will consolidate the two firms—a merger, as we business magnates put it. You will be appointed General Sales Manager of the Line Islands Trading Company's Branch Station at Danger Island; I will be President and Public Relations Executive, never appearing except on ceremonial occasions, such as the arrival of Supercargo Bates to take stock, the inspirational fixing of prices, the mammonish rite of depositing surplus cash in the money-bag, or the bottling of a new brew. I shall make it a rule never to interfere with the sales department; I shall remain in the executive offices upstairs, meditating on policy," and with soldierly precision Javan turned on the heel of one foot, the toe of the other, and marched back the length of the porch. He made several turns before speaking again; then:

"Your salary," he said, "will be raised five shillings a month"—here he measured the length of the porch three times—"while I," he went on as though there had been no pause, "will be content with the station's profits, which incidentally I shall need, for I am contemplating marriage."

With the word "marriage" Toa hung his head. "You are always talking about marriage," he said listlessly. "Why don't you marry, Javan? You can have any girl on the island—even Miss Red-Jones."

"Quite true; but we white men do not act with the impulsiveness of Danger Island store-boys. No doubt I shall marry when I find a maiden who is willing to preserve her virtue for me alone—not parcel it out among the boys. . . . Now, Toa, how about your own marriage? Your father has been dead for two months; Miss Red-Jones is up and about: you should act promptly—before someone else acts promptly."

"There's no hope," Toa muttered. "She has as much as said that she will never have me. Haven't you heard that Bones wants to adopt the baby, and that Sea Foam won't adopt it because it was born out of wedlock? Miss Red-Jones hasn't made up her mind, but I'm sure she'll let Bones have the baby. Next Sunday it will be announced in church. She wouldn't do this if she loved me. . . . And I had been hoping she would marry me, now that I am a rich man with a store all my own and a bag full of silver shillings."

"Why does Miss Red-Jones let *any* man adopt the baby?"

"Oh, it won't be the kind of adoption you're thinking about. The baby will be a 'feeding child' of Bones. Miss Red-Jones will keep her baby, but Bones will be responsible for its food. I can't be the 'feeding father' because I am the real father. But if I married her I could be both. . . . It's no use being rich: only girls like Miss Tern want me now."

"Of course; your store and your money are keeping Miss Red-Jones from marrying you," Javan said, stopping before Toa to glance at him, with a friendly scowl. "If she takes you now the women will taunt her with marrying for money, and so, though loving you but not for your money, she will go back to Bones as a gesture of self-justification."

"Oh, Javan, what shall I do?"

"Murder Bones. If you are afraid to kill him you do not deserve Miss Red-Jones. You should startle her by a spectacular murder—shock her into accepting you."

At this point Javan resumed pacing the porch. He knew he was not inciting a young man to commit murder, that Toa was temperamentally unable to kill. Murder is a rare crime among the Polynesians; even the old wars seldom resulted in the death of more than one man. In the present case Javan scarcely hoped to incite even the will to kill; but he believed it possible that by suggesting the ultimate crime he might actuate in Toa the will to assault Bones. To Javan's abnormal psyche this would be salutary.

"Kill him, Toa!"

"You would have me murder Bones!" Toa cried.

"Certainly I would. You are just civilised enough to feel horror at the thought of killing your enemy, while I am just primitive enough to believe it is the logical solution to your problem. You must remember that in both ancient and modern times excellent precedents have been set. In former days, when the leader of the primal horde was becoming impotent, he was clubbed by one of the youths of the family; to-day, when some roué is caught with a young man's wife, he is dispatched with a firearm. In both cases the so-called crime is condoned. But if you have scruples then murder him symbolically. Dog his steps, enact a murder before his house, stand up and fight him. Incidentally, you cannot kill Bones. A bullet will not penetrate his hide any more than would one of your baseballs. Always he has lived and always he will live—but you must not have this in mind when murdering him. Watch your chance. Hit him as hard as you can—and I'll be right at your heels with the arnica and the sticking-plaster; also, I'll be prepared to deal with the chief of police if he so much as suspects a homicide. I have a political pull: I am in a position to blackmail successfully the police force.

"When you have settled with Bones," Javan added sententiously, "Miss Red-Jones will return to you."

"Can't she return without my hitting Bones?"

"No; for she needs an excuse. She is ashamed to return to you. And moreover she needs some powerful emotional shock, such as Bones's horrible death, to make her place in its correct proportionate place your own relapses into the arms of Miss Tern, her bitter enemy."

"Ah, Javan, you are always giving me advice. You remember the time you gave Miss Tears the dress of Fuji silk, and forced me to buy a dress for both Miss Red-Jones and Miss Tern? That was the beginning of my trouble —and it was all your fault." Then, moodily: "Maybe I'll have to marry Miss Tears. She's going to be made into a woman at the next meeting of the Village Fathers."

"You will leave her alone," Javan snapped, again stopping before Toa, but this time scowling in anything but a kindly way. "I have plans of my own for Miss Tears.

"Now, Toa," he went on presently, once again pacing the porch, "you do not deserve Miss Red-Jones. Probably she is eating her heart away for you, and you won't even murder Bones for her."

"Do you think she really loves me?"

"I am sure she does. You were her first lover; you are the father of her child; you are young, handsome, wealthy, the best match on the island, myself excepted. She avoids you only from shame. Any decent woman would, in her position. She would be a hussy if she tried to win you back now."

"Then it's no use."

"If I were in your place," Javan cried, a resolute note coming in his voice, his long arms flung out in a fine gesture, "I'd have her back in my arms to-night! I'd call Bones out to the lagoon beach: I'd take off my shirt; I'd spit on my hands and baste him one in the nose, like that!" and Javan struck his right fist against his left palm. "Then I'd baste him one in the ear, then one in the eye, then one in the other eye, then one in his ugly mouth, et cetera, et cetera, until he lay groaning and bleeding on the sand! I'm that kind of a man! I'm of the audacious nomadic

blood that craves wide horizons, bloody battles with flashing sabres, volleys of musketry, and screams of anguish; hot love with virgins raped and matrons dishonoured; feasting in sacked palaces, and hunger out on the steppes where the wolves howl; a turbulent life and sudden death! Ah, Toa, Toa, there are deep and subtle workings in the unconscious mind. When Miss Red-Jones saw me strangling, braining, jugulating Bones, she would feel, far back in the secret recesses of her mind, the overwhelming urge of the trogloditic woman who watches one of the young men vanquish the Old One. She would know that a new master had come to the cave, a stronger master than the Old One, a master who could protect her, beget strong sons in her womb, kill the dinosaur, the Tyrannosaurus, and the woolly rhinoceros for her sustenance—a new master, Toa, a handsome godlike youth where the Old One had been decrepit and senile! That's the way I'd win back Miss Red-Jones. Aye, Toa; but you,"—and here he shrugged his shoulders—"are only an impulsive youth: one of the type that are always dominated, that run from the leader of the primal horde, instead of booting him out of the cave!"

"I'll do it!" Toa cried suddenly, leaving the doorway to tramp across the porch, his fists clenched, fire in his eyes. "I won't murder him, but I'll hit him so hard"—here Toa raised his clenched fist—"so hard"—he moved to the end of the porch—"so hard—he stopped to eye Javan belligerently—"so hard that Miss Red-Jones will love me again!" and with that he disappeared around the corner of the trading station.

XXXV

The Breasts of Miss Red-Jones

The night was one of the kind in which the time element is punctuated by events—events figuratively like commas, colons, and dashes—events which give coherence to the passage of time, divide it into definite clauses, make it computable, give measurable form to the nights that otherwise would be remembered only as indistinguishable hours.

The civilised man has habits of life to punctuate his day as well as his night. Thus he can recall that he cut his finger before winding the grandfather's clock, he scolded the cook after finishing the morning's paper, he heard the fire engine pass just as he was taking his six o'clock dose of Doctor Pendergast's Body-building, Soporiferous, Salutiferous, and Therapeutic Catholicon. To the atoll dweller these punctuating events are lost. Life flows in the unruffled stream of time, untroubled by the rocks of events. But on this particular night several occurrences broke and thereby lengthened to the perception the smooth flow of time.

First, there was the nine o'clock curfew which, after an interval of several weeks, Benny had decided to sound again, Javan laid down his copy of *History of the Conquest of Mexico* and smiled as he listened to the tom-tom, from its first long-intervalled detonations to its final rapid salvo. "That did Benny good," he thought, when again the night was still. "He was reprimanded by Chief of Police Ura to-day, but now he has rehabilitated himself in the cloak of authority."

Later he heard the constable passing on his rounds, calling into the night a sharp "Who goes there?" or a "Get

to your homes, you neighbours!" Then Javan heard the voices of the young unmarried as they gathered in small groups before passing to the outer beach; then the grumbling of old folks, the reef's distant mutter, the sustained whispering in the palm-fronds.

Javan picked up his book. For some time the village was very still: time flowed tranquilly for an hour, for two hours—there was no punctuating event to mark or make computable its length. The reality of this Danger Island night was obscured by the greater reality of the "Melancholy Night" on the causeway of Tlacopan. Then, as gold and human flesh was hurled into the Lake of Tezcuco, the Aztecs screamed and killed, the Spaniards groaned and died, abruptly Javan was brought back to the lesser reality of the objective night. The wind had freshened, and now an impertinent little squall passed piping over the island, pelted for a brief moment the station, then, as though dismayed by its own audacity, fled across the leeward reef and to sea.

Now came the best part of the night—the hour after the last village sound is silenced to the hour of the first cock-crow: from eleven to two, presumably, but Javan would have to guess at the time, for he owns no clock. At this time the reef raises its voice to a mighty bellowing; the susurration in the palm-fronds changes from an indefinite, metallic whispering to numerous, distinguishable voices, each with a quality of its own. For a little space Javan listened to the night voices. Even the roar of the reef seemed benevolent, the whispering leaves as gentle as the voices of lovers. On a night like this it seemed incredible that at one time men had marched into a peaceful country to slay, rape, and pillage. But so they had, even as he had read a few moments before; and so they were doing now, somewhere in the world.

Suddenly his thoughts were broken by the lonely cry of a curfew-bird of ill omen to the Danger Islanders.

"I wonder who will die to-night?" he thought, and felt

vaguely troubled. In the stillness of the night the telepathic communications had been opened: a hundred or more of the neighbours, startled by the curlew's ominous cry, had electrified the air with a message of alarm which even Javan could intercept.

Then he heard footsteps running along the road. He laid down his book. The peace of the night had been shattered, not by sounds from the physical world, but by a cry of distress from the psychic world. He knew positively that there was trouble on Danger Island.

The running footsteps turned from the road to the trading station, there was a patter of feet on the balcony stairs; then Toa rushed breathlessly into the room.

"He is with her!" Toa shouted. "George told me! They're on their way to the outer beach now!"

"Kill him, Toa!"

"I'm going to!"

Javan sighed as he turned the lamp low. The moment for action had come. Together they hurried through the sleeping village to leave the road by the path of the outer beach. It was very still and windless in the groves of coconut-trees. The taro beds were little inland seas glistening in the starlight, undulating when a breeze passed over them. The smell of muddy soil and decaying vegetation rose hot and stagnant. In a few moments they were hurrying past Jonesy's memory stone, then down the avenue to the outer beach, where the wind struck them suddenly, the roar of reef-combers seemed to break on their ears with premeditated violence.

Beyond the last of the shore bush Toa stopped, grasped Javan's arm, and listened; but the next instant he was hurrying forward again, almost running, following the grunted call of a mouth-organ from the direction of the Point of Smoking Seas.

They found him at the edge of a copse of magnolia bush, sprawled out like a great hairy ape, half-naked, the mouth-organ to his lips. Miss Red-Jones sat in a huddled posture

close by, partially hidden by an overhanging bush. He rose slowly to his feet when they approached.

"Go after him, Toa!" Javan cried. "Hit him! Kill him! It's your only chance for freedom!" And as Toa sprang forward, "Your only chance," Javan thought, "your physical father is dead; now kill the other father and you will be free for ever!"

They met, not in the Danger Island manner, wrestling, but with blows. Javan saw this much, but little more, for he was fearful of the outcome and did not wish to see it. He moved to Miss Red-Jones, sat on the sand close by her, and put his arm around her shoulder to hold her tightly. "Toa will be killed!" he heard her gasp.

Javan did not watch the fight, but it must have been a vicious business, for both of them were in the dispensary next morning, and Javan used four yards of sticking-plaster on Toa alone. With his arm around Miss Red-Jones he lowered his eyes and kept them fixed on the neck opening of her dress. It had been slit to a point below her breasts, perhaps so she could easily nurse her baby, or perhaps it had been torn open. All at once Javan became conscious of her two full breasts, light brown and velvety, jutting out like the breasts of Miss Tern. He tried to fix his mind on them, to speculate on what elusive and covert quality they manifested, on why they were so fascinating. Were his senses stirred by an unconscious memory of the time he had been nursed by his mother, had sucked sweet warm milk from her breasts, had buried his nose in their soft flesh? Were Miss Red-Jones's breasts a symbol of sustenance, or of security, or simply of sex differentiation? Or was there something intrinsically beautiful about their harmonious curves, the deep cleft between them, the scarcely visible veins intwining toward the nipples? It had something to do with both sex and beauty, he thought. Then, hearing but forcing himself not to understand the laboured breathing of the two men, the intermittent thump of fists against flesh, "Why are her breasts beauti-

ful?" he asked himself again—"her breasts so full and round since she had her baby. Are they archetypal symbols to which we respond pleasurably, or do they suggest to the sentient self that this is woman? Both, probably. The dawn gives us pleasure because it is an archetypal symbol of rhythm and harmony; Miss Red-Jones's breasts because they are a symbol . . . of what? Of many things, I fancy: of immortality, for they symbolise the female that will re-create us in her offspring; of sustenance, for at one time they fed us; of physical love, for they are the most evident of the sexual characteristics; of security, for once we buried our face between them and escaped from the external world. . . I wonder if Miss Tears' breasts will fill out in such symmetry and beauty when she has had her first baby? . . . Miss Tears—will she, too . . ."

Javan shuddered. His arm gripped Miss Red-Jones's shoulder tightly; one hand reached down to cup its fingers over her breast. For a moment his mind seemed blank; then abruptly he became conscious of a tremor in the breast under his hand. A cry of terror came from Miss Red-Jones's lips; then the words: "He's killing Toa!" gasped in a note of panic fear.

For the fraction of a second Javan raised his eyes. He saw Toa hurtling backward, the other man leaning forward with his clenched fist outstretched, his chin thrust out, one leg before the other, his back bent slightly. The glance was so brief that the two men seemed motionless against the background of foaming reef and sky; but Javan knew that the picture had been indelibly impressed in his mind.

Again he lowered his eyes. Miss Red-Jones's breasts were tense and motionless; he could feel her rapid heartbeats. Then, of a sudden, she relaxed, and he knew that Toa still had a chance. The fight went on, audible but unseen; but now, as Javan stared fixedly at the breasts of Miss Red-Jones, his mind seemed blocked from all conscious thought. A kind of terror took possession of

him. About him he sensed that fierce forces were turned loose, forces that cripple and kill the mind as well as the body—while, symbolised in the two full breasts, he sensed protection, yet could not give it a name. He sensed that here was something he had known ages ago, when fear of life had brought screams from his lips. Here was a sanctuary he had desired to possess always, he desired to possess now, to feel under his hand, to lay his head on in an attempt to recapture the peace and security it had given him in babyhood.

Suddenly Javan became aware that Miss Red-Jones's tense little body had relaxed and that she was leaning limply against his, weeping. For a full moment he did not raise his eyes. Staring at her breasts, feeling the one under his hand, he knew, but failed to put into words, that at this moment he was experiencing an emotion which for years he had ignored. The woman in his arms brought a new warmth to his heart—not that of lust, which he knew well enough, but a warmth associated in some subtle way with his childhood and his mother's love. He sighed, aware at last that his life was being wasted; then slowly he raised his eyes.

The Old One was flung out on the sand, bleeding, probably unconscious, his breath coming in short and raucous gasps. Toa stood as straight and still as a Greek marble, his head thrown back, a superb figure against the stars. Then Javan became aware that Miss Red-Jones had broken away from him. He saw her moving slowly toward Toa, her first lover, the new master of the cave.

XXXVI

Marriage on One of His Majesty's Coral Atolls

"I suppose," Mama said, absentmindedly breaking the egg in the sugar-bowl, "you don't know that Toa and Miss Red-Jones were married yesterday. You never know what is happening on your own island." At this point she was silenced by the egg, peering indignantly from the clean white sugar. She shrugged her shoulders in a little gesture which might mean "accidents will happen even in the best of regulated families," and tried messily with a spoon to remove intact the egg. Failing, she scooped out the egg and the dampened sugar, threw them out of the window, then fried a second egg with complete success.

"What a beautiful morning, Mama!" Javan cried. "Think of what we are missing! On a morning like this, on Matauea, the Familiar Spirit of the Dawn would be sure to appear—and here we are in the village, gossiping about marriage! If the schooner doesn't show up in the next day or two we'll sail over to Matauea and observe the dawn. . . . You may speak, Mama. Something about marriage, wasn't it? . . . Ah, Mama, some day I shall speak to you about marriage. Since the fight on the outer beach I have been thinking that even I must marry . . . but she must be a wild and beautiful maiden, Mama—wild and beautiful and obedient and ignorant, with epicanthic folds and auburn hair—like the nomad maidens that wandered over the steppes, ages ago, when I was young."

"Yes, Javan," Mama said hurriedly, worried lest Javan decide the moment opportune for a long dissertation on marriage. "Toa and Miss Red-Jones were married yesterday, and it was one of the most exciting marriages we have ever had. Miss Tern was so jealous she gave them only

an old handkerchief, which wasn't very clean, and she said out loud, so everybody could hear her, that she didn't want Toa, anyway, so she had let Miss Red-Jones have him. Oh, it was terribly exciting! I had to tell you about Miss Tern first of all—I just couldn't hold it back—but now I'll start at the beginning. . . ."

For a brief moment Mama glanced unappreciatively at the shafts of golden light flung across the sky in prodigal gesture. She raised her eyebrows, a wistful smile played on her lips, and she said:

"In the morning Toa put on his cowboy pants and his striped singlet, and Miss Red-Jones put on her green dress with the lace, and they went to Chief of Police Ura, where they put their names in the book, and paid seven shillings and sixpence, which is too much money, Javan. I don't know why Ura makes all the young people pay him seven shillings and sixpence just because they put their names in the book. But it has something to do with the Reverend Johns or, maybe, Governor Withers. There are a good many other things like that—like the shilling every man has to pay because the government makes his children go to school, and the sixpence Sea Foam makes you pay when he sprinkles the poor little baby and says its name. . . . But what was I saying, Javan?"

"Lord knows. Even I sometimes fail to follow your circumlocutions. But just keep going, Mama dear, and you may wander back to your subject—or you may not." Then, with a sigh: "Women, they have signed their names and paid their money. . . ."

"Yes, Javan, just as I was telling you before you interrupted me. Then they went to their homes, and Toa put on his white pants with the wide legs and the silver buttons you attach the suspenders to—only Toa didn't have any suspenders, and George couldn't find his, and no one would lend him any, so he used a belt instead, which hid the buttons—and they were such shiny ones, too! And he put on his canvas shoes, and the white shirt with the collar

that doesn't button up at the throat. And Miss Red-Jones put on her white muslin dress that has all the Swiss embroidery on it, and she put on her black shoes that Sea Foam had bought for her, and she took my blue silk parasol that I had lent her, and then walked down the road, where she met Toa close to Bones's house. When she saw him she cried: 'Oh! It is Toa!' like that. And Toa cried: 'Oh! It is Miss Red-Jones! Where are you going, Miss Red-Jones?' And Miss Red-Jones answered him: 'I am just going for a little walk.' Then Toa said: 'Let us go to Sea Foam's house and get married.' 'All right,' Miss Red-Jones replied, so they started down the road toward Sea Foam's house, Toa walking in front and Miss Red-Jones following behind him. Oh, it was so nice and exciting! I cried a little when I saw how they did it, because it reminded me of the way William and I got married one time, long ago, when we were little children. . . ."

Mama sighed, brushed a few tears from her eyes, and continued: "Sea Foam joined their hands together while he said some things out of the Bible, and it didn't cost them seven shillings and sixpence, like Ura had charged them. So afterward they went to Toa's store, where Toa put on the black suit you gave him, and the necktie with flowers on it, and the garters, and the yellow shoes, and the bowler hat George had lent him. And Miss Red-Jones put on her beautiful Fuji silk dress with all the blue ribbons, and the necklace that Deacon Bribery had bought for her, and the veil she had made from mosquito netting, and the white canvas shoes, and the stockings—only she put them on before the shoes, and one of them had a hole in it, which she tried to hide by crossing her legs; but Miss Tern saw it right away, and she told everybody about it, so Miss Red-Jones didn't try to hide it any more by crossing her legs, because everybody knew about it anyway.

"Then all the relatives and friends and everybody except you, Javan, came and brought their presents. I think they must have received a hundred mats and as many

hats; and there were six roast pigs, and lots of fowls, and taro, and a pile of drinking nuts as high as you are, and you are the tallest man on the island, so you see there were plenty of drinking nuts. Oh, it was wonderful! Deacon Bribery had killed and roasted his pet duck that used to eat little pieces of coconut out of his hand; and when he came with it there were tears in his eyes. He told everybody that it was his pet duck that used to eat out of his hand, but he had killed it nevertheless, and all because he loved Toa so much. . . . You got the duck, Javan. Yes; when they started dividing the feast they said you had better have the duck because you wouldn't mind about its being Deacon Bribery's pet that used to eat little pieces of coconut out of his hand. Oh, Javan! the poor little duck is in the food safe now, and I'll serve it at dinner-time, but I don't know how you can be so cruel!" and with that the old dear again brushed a few tears from her eyes. Then presently she glanced at Javan interrogatively, and when Javan had prompted her she went on:

"But King-of-the-Sky said you should have a roast pig instead of the poor little duck—only he said it because he always likes to disagree with everybody. Then Toa jumped up and cried, 'No! he shall have the duck.' So it was settled that way."

"I'll raise his wages," Javan muttered.

"Don't talk, Javan!" Mama cried. "I'm not finished yet. . . . So when King-of-the-Sky brought his present he started whooping as loud as he could: 'Oh! my son, Toa! Oh! my daughter, Miss Red-Jones!' though really he's not their father at all, only he said it that way so people would listen to him. Then he whooped: 'In my right hand a roast chicken! In my left hand a taro pudding!' and he held the two things up above his head—and we all could see that the chicken was a little one, and the taro pudding wasn't very big either. But he made out that they were the finest on the island: and he danced and whooped and sang for a long time, just as if he had given something fine. Oh! it

was a wonderful marriage! Bones gave them his mouth-organ, and he grinned very friendly, even though there was still some sticking-plaster on his face. Then pretty soon Sea Foam came, but he didn't give anything at all: he just preached a sermon and said some things out of the Bible, and claimed that Miss Red-Jones was still a virgin, but we all knew he was lying. . . . He had to say she was a virgin, Javan, he being parson and the father of Miss Red-Jones, and she being his daughter. It was night by the time they had given all their presents; then they divided everything among the relatives, and they all left Toa's store to go to the big meeting of the Village Fathers. . . . I don't suppose, Javan, that you have heard about what happened last night at the meeting of the Village Fathers: you never know what is . . ."

"We will speak about it later, Mama," Javan broke it. "Now, while you were telling me about this marriage I was pondering its deeper significance. Toa has not been pawing the ground. He has no illusions to lose on his first night of married life with Miss Red-Jones—or rather Mrs. Toa. He is pleased, for he knows that now it is unlikely that she will ever again be unfaithful to him, though she may be if he consorts again with Miss Tern. Toa himself will be unfaithful at long separated intervals which become longer as he grows older. Also, during any future pregnancies of Mrs. Toa he will consort with one of her female cousins. This will not be looked on as infidelity. . . . Mama! There's Miss Tears! How beautiful she is in the light of the dawn! She has left her clothes at home, the dear! She is going to bathe in the lagoon!"

"I suppose you'd have her wear her clothes when she swims in the lagoon and take them off when she goes to church," Mama commented huffly.

"Aye, Mama, in the security of her Creator's presence clothes are not needed; but here in the village. . . . Really, Mama, isn't she lovely! See how the morning light filters through her fawn-coloured hair! Ah! she makes my

blood run hot in my veins; she revives old memories of the nomads with whom I roamed—roamed over the steppes, fighting, searching for a promised land, loving fiercely and dying out under the stars—out on the steppes where the wolves howl and the elephants trumpet. . . ."

"He will consort with one of her female cousins," Mama prompted, with a sarcastic snicker; but Javan only sighed, and, "Aye,' he muttered; "no doubt I was about to say something profound, but it is lost for ever—lost as surely as the old life on the steppes is lost. . . . Look, Mama! Did you see how the spray rose sparkling when Miss Tears plunged in the water? Oh, Mama, look at her now, slapping the water with her lovely hands! She is glancing toward the cook-house! Isn't she a dear!"

"At the meeting of the Village Fathers," Mama said abruptly, without preamble, "they talked about dividing the island. You remember, the governor said all the land must be divided, so every man will own a piece of land, and then all the land won't be owned by everybody. Well, some of the Village Fathers wanted to divide the land. Sea Foam said, yes, you got to divide it; and you mustn't forget that on all the islands the Missionary Society owns lots of land, but here it doesn't own any land at all. Then he said that when the island is divided the society must have at least half the island. But after a little, when King-of-the-Sky objected to giving the church so much, Sea Foam said, all right, maybe he'd take a little less, but he must have plenty of land with coconut-trees and taro beds.

"Then Chief of Police Ura said that the government must have a big piece of land too, for it doesn't own even the land the court-house stands on. He thought the government ought to have half the island, because in the ancient days the kings owned half, and wasn't the government the king now? But by and by he said he might take a little less than half if the church took less.

"Then everybody started talking at once, and one man wanted one piece of land because of all the fine coconut-

trees, and another man wanted another piece because the sea-birds roosted on it. They got terribly angry, Javan. It looked like they would go over to the islets to-morrow and divide the land—that is, if they didn't fight too much. It was the first time they had said such harsh words in the village council. It was terrible!

"Then Toa stood up, and he cried: 'Village Fathers, silence!' just like that, because he wasn't scared at all. Everybody was very still; they all raised their heads and looked at Toa. Oh! He was beautiful, standing there straight and tall and like a god except for the little pieces of sticking-plaster on his nose. 'Village Fathers, silence!' he shouted, waving his arms around and making his eyes look angry. 'The land shall not be divided! To divide the land will bring trouble to our island! Look at you now: you are quarrelling like a coopful of roosters. One man wants this piece of land and one man wants that piece. If you are quarrelling now, what will you do when the land is divided? You will become greedy; you will guard your land: you will steal coconuts from your neighbour's land. The man with land that bears taro will be well fed; the man with poor land will go hungry. This is an evil custom and I will not allow it. Also, the man with a single son will marry his son to a girl who is an only daughter, so that they may have much land; and the man with many children will find matches for them only among the children of large families. Thus in the generations to come some of the families will own much land while others will be paupers!'

"Oh!" Mama cried, "it was wonderful the way he said it, standing so straight and unafraid, glaring at them, moving his arms this way and that way, and sometimes stamping his foot. And this was the first time he had talked to the Village Fathers for a long time—ever since they had shamed him by calling him a 'hairless one.' All the old men nodded their heads, and not a one of them so much as whispered, though Sea Foam cleared his throat two or

three times, like he does when he is going to say something out of the Bible. Then pretty soon Toa shouted: 'We must think of the children, Village Fathers—*our children!* And who am I that speaks to you? I am Toa, one of the traders of Danger Island! Toa, the husband of Miss Red-Jones! Toa, the father of my child! Toa, the man who fought Bones and flung him on the sand of the outer beach! I am Toa-the-man, and I say to you, you shall not divide the land! You shall think of the children—*our children!*'

"That settled it!" Mama cried, with a girlish toss of her head. "Toa was so beautiful they didn't have a word to say! The island won't be divided, no matter what the governor wants. . . . And when that was settled they called for Miss Tears. . . ."

"What's that, Mama?" Javan cried, sitting bolt upright, a lump rising in his throat

"They called for Miss Tears," Mama repeated, sniffling a little, "and they made her into a woman . . . but of course you know all about it; you know everything that happens on your own island."

Mama closed up like a clam. Javan felt a shudder pass over him. He knew that he had turned pale; but presently, "Yes, Mama," he muttered, trying to control his voice; "she was made into a woman, and she went to the outer beach with whom?"

"With no one!" Mama screamed. "Think of it! Everybody is talking about it! She went home and to bed!"

For a few seconds Javan's brain seemed afire. "She is the first girl, in the history of the island, to have preserved her virginity for the man she hopes to marry!" he exclaimed to himself. "She has been entirely wrong in doing this, and I am entirely wrong in admiring her for it; but though she has broken from the traditions of her people to please me I cannot break from the traditions of my people to allow her the freedom of promiscuity."

He brought his fist down on the table with a bang, turned to Mama, and, "Set two plates at the table

to-morrow!" he cried: "Miss Tears and I are going to be married to-day!"

"Sail ho! Sail ho! Oh yes, bloody Hell, sail ho!" William yelled, as he rushed in the cookhouse.

"Sail ho!" sounded from the windward point.

"Sail ho!" was screamed through the villages.

Cockroach Schooner in the offing. Passengers ashore. Rush, confusion. Bloody, bloody, bloody. Reverend Johns looking for sin. Governor Withers looking for stupidity. Captain sending a bottle of rum ashore, with congratulations on the marriage of Javan Moonlight and Miss Tears. Supercargo Bates wanting to know where that virgin is, that Miss Red-Jones that he's going to make into a woman to-night, by God! Brew finished. Mat hid somewhere. Oh Lord! let's get the lot of them aboard and away!

THE END

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